Today's
The Herald-Palladium
included inside

Dowagiac softball falls in regional semis
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Dowagiac News

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DOWAGIAC

City council OKs social district

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Adults will soon be able to enjoy a beer or cocktail outdoors in downtown Dowagiac.

Dowagiac City Council members unanimously voted to allow the Greater Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce to move forward with the process to create a social district and "commons area" in downtown Dowagiac.

The beverages allowed will be purchased from specially licensed establishments, and will couple the drink with a designated, one-time use cup for patrons to leave with and enjoy outdoors.

Proposed social district logo

The social district is a broader space defined by the city, where a commons area may be established to consume alcoholic beverages in marked cups from specially licensed restaurants and bars may be consumed by adults 21 years of age and over. The approved resolution will now be submitted to the state to be added to approved social districts. After that, businesses can apply to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission for the special liquor license required to be a part of the district. The establishments that currently meet the licensing requirements to obtain a social district permit are Wounded Minnow Saloon, Woodfire Trattoria and Oak & Ash BBQ.

The proposed social district will be open year-round from noon to 10 p.m. Monday through Sunday in areas that include specific signage.

The proposed perimeter of the social district runs along West Division Street, stretching eastward from the Beckwith Theatre and past Bakeman Barbers to Depot Drive. The boundary cuts toward the southwest, running parallel to the Amtrak railroad line along Depot Drive before stopping past the Historic Dowagiac Depot near the intersection with Park Place.

From South Front Street near the station, the boundary moves northwest for one block along South Front Street to Main Street. It heads west for half a block down Main Street before making a turn northeast, cutting behind the properties on South Front Street. The boundary then cuts northwest to cross Pennsylvania Avenue – tracking along Main Street to New York Avenue at the Dowagiac Library Pavilion – northeast up New York Avenue and transitions onto Commercial Street, leading to West Division Street near the Beckwith Theatre to close the loop.

See **COUNCIL**, page A3

Danielle Lucas took the gavel to preside over the Dowagiac City Council meeting Monday when Mayor Patrick M. Bakeman had a scheduled absence.
Photos provided

Lucas becomes first woman to preside over Dowagiac City Council meeting

By PMG STAFF

DOWAGIAC — Monday's Dowagiac City Council meeting marked a groundbreaking chapter in local history.

Danielle Lucas, Ward One Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem, took the gavel to preside over the Dowagiac City Council meeting when Mayor Patrick M. Bakeman had a scheduled absence. The session marks the first time in the city's history that a woman and a person of color has led a Dowagiac council meeting.

"I can't think of a better person to lead in my place than Mayor Pro Tem Lucas," said Dowagiac Mayor Patrick M. Bakeman. "Danielle has demonstrated her commitment to this community through her dedication to her family and to the city of Dowagiac. She is truly a role model for all, and I am proud of the leadership she continues to provide for our city."

Lucas has long been a dedicated servant to the community, having served on the council since 2015.

Cassopolis celebrates completion of Phase II of Stone Lake Beach project

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader correspondent

CASSOPOLIS — The excitement outweighed rainy weather and road detours, bringing a large crowd to downtown Cassopolis Friday for the ribbon cutting for Phase II of the Stone Lake Beach project.

The project included many improvements updates to Stone Lake Beach, including:

- Permanent amphitheater seating
- Pavilion
- Erosion control
- Mitigation of invasive species
- Accessible kayak launch
- Permanent bathrooms
- Paving parking lots and alleyway
- Beach expansion
- Pioneer Log Cabin Museum site improvements

The event coincided with the kick off of Beach Bash Weekend in the village. Despite the weather, the new amphitheater seating area was full of people sitting, standing and spilling out into the rain as the village celebrated the latest development of their ongoing beach project.

Village Council members, staff, volunteers and local business owners were all in attendance.

Speakers at the event included Village Manager Emilie LaGrow, Clerk Tonia Williams, Department of Public Works Superintendent Ben Anderson, Community Development Director

See **PROJECT**, page A8

Photo courtesy of Justin Flagel
Community members gathered at Stone Lake Friday, June 5 to celebrate the completion of Phase II of the Stone Lake Beach project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

OPINION

America won't save local journalism by ignoring newspapers

From AMERICA'S NEWSPAPERS

For the past two decades there has been growing interest in funding local news organizations. As local newspapers have come under increasing pressure from economic challenges and shifting media consumption patterns, community leaders have witnessed the negative impact on civic life.

In response, local, state and national philanthropic organizations have stepped forward to provide varying levels of support for journalism.

Much of that support, however, has focused primarily on launching new initiatives – particularly nonprofit local news organizations.

The conventional wisdom among many funders seems to be that the traditional newspaper model is no longer viable, so they are looking to support something different in the hope that a new model will provide the answer to sustainable journalism. Unfortunately, the past 20 years have shown that "new" does not necessarily mean "improved."

No single replacement model has yet demonstrated a scalable, long-term solution for local journalism. Many newspapers, meanwhile, have continued evolving their business models, investing heavily in digital journalism while also relying on a mix of revenue streams that may include print and digital.

In recent years, a number of new nonprofit and digital news outlets have closed despite receiving substantial philanthropic support. One notable example

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John Andrew Stauffer
Nancy Louise "Nan" Axelson
Mary Kathleen Regan
Cindra L. Mikel

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FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ Great season Chieftains softball. So proud of you. You'll come back stronger than ever.

■ Congrats to The Grooming Shop for 30 years in Edwardsburg. Thank you for keeping our pups fresh.

■ Data center moratoriums are what we need right now.

■ Drugs are bad, friends. Don't throw your life away, or someone else's.

■ Beach Bash was a great time in Cassopolis. Thank you to all of the volunteers. Huge turnout and great fun.

■ I had no idea Sister Lakes Brewing has been here 10 years. Feels like it opened just yesterday.

■ I hope the naysayers are happy Meijer won't be coming to Niles Township.

■ Please be careful with your fireworks. Don't let children play with them. I see burn victims all the time.

WEATHER

Sunday: Showers, mainly before 8 a.m. High near 70. Northwest wind 10 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80 percent.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 52.

Monday: Sunny, with a high near 74.

Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 54.

Tuesday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 77.

Tuesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms before 2 a.m., then a slight chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 55. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

Uncovering history

Edwardsburg elementary students unearth time capsule

SUBMITTED

EDWARDSBURG — Students and staff at Eagle Lake Elementary in Edwardsburg took a step back in time Tuesday as they unearthed two time capsules buried 25 years ago.

Originally buried on June 6, 2001, by Eagle Lake students, the capsules marked a special moment in the school's history as Eagle Lake Elementary completed its final year serving grades 3 through 5 and celebrated the start of a new century.

Fifteen student classroom representatives joined Principal Jared Melander, Librarian Patti Thunell, and district staff to help uncover the capsules. Throughout the morning, classes visited the excavation site to see the capsules and explore some of the treasures and memories preserved inside.

Photos provided

PACE of Southwest Michigan to open new Niles facility

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

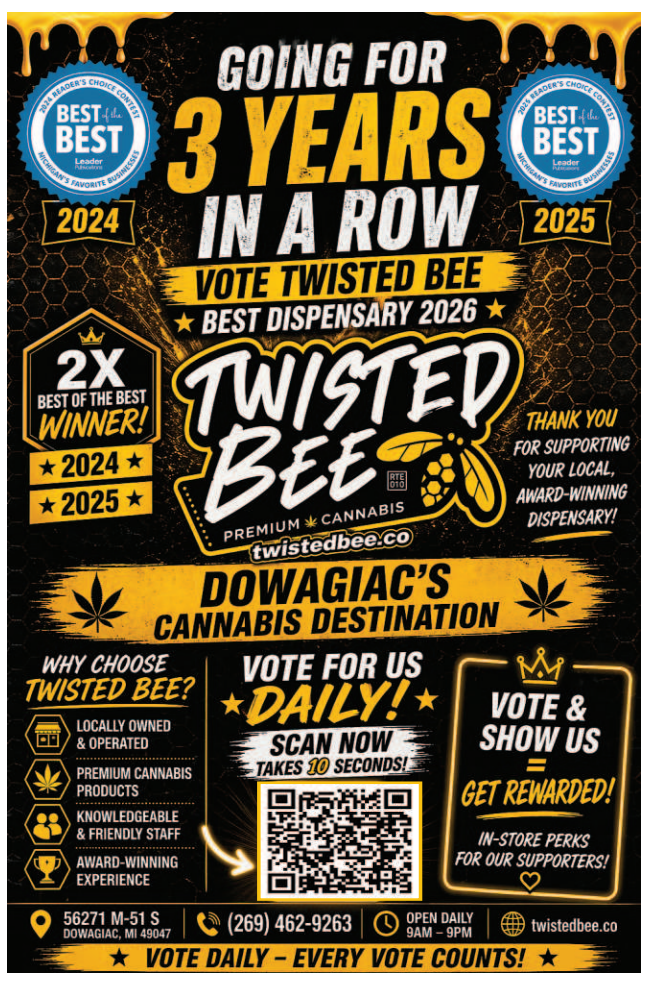
NILES — PACE of Southwest Michigan will be opening the doors to its new day center in the heart of downtown Niles June 25.

This expansion involved a complete renovation of the property at 60 E Main Street to include an adult day center and a primary care clinic. It will be the organization's second location in Southwest Michigan, providing eligible adults 55+ with support services to help them remain independent in their homes. This expansion will allow the program to serve up to 150 more participants and will create more than 10 jobs.

The new center is located within half a mile of multiple senior apartment complexes in Niles, 5.5 miles from the neighboring community of Buchanan, and within 15 miles of the Cass County communities of Dowagiac, Cassopolis, and Edwardsburg, all of which are in PACE of Southwest Michigan's current service area.

The new center will offer the same services as PACE of Southwest Michigan's current center in St. Joseph, including a medical clinic, therapy gym, weekday activities, and meals for participants.

"We're excited to expand the PACE program to serve more people in southern Berrien and Cass counties,," said Executive Director Mike Zdrodowski. "Our Niles location will help more seniors continue living independently in the homes they love. We look forward to building new relationships and supporting older adults."



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COUNCIL

From page A1

Dowagiac is the first Cass County municipality to establish a social district and will be joining neighboring communities Niles, Buchanan, Baroda, Benton Harbor, Bridgman, St. Joseph, Stevensville, Watervliet, Kalamazoo, Vicksburg, Decatur, Lawton and South Haven, according to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission.

In other business, council approved Cross Excavating and Demolition's bid in the amount of $36,872 for the demolition of 512 New York Ave. According to council documents, the property was purchased last fall due to its proximity to the new water plant and future trail system. The property is vacant Cross Excavating and Demolition, LLC was the low bidder at $36,872. While the cost of this project is a little higher than recent demolition projects, the higher cost is due to some relatively significant asbestos removal.

In further business, the council approved:

- The 2026 Tax Levy Resolution
- A Resolution Establishing a Special Assessment Roll for Summer 2026 Delinquent Utilities
- A Resolution Establishing a Special Assessment Roll for Summer 2026 Blight and Mowing Assessments

NEWSPAPERS

From page A1

is The Houston Landing, which quickly burned through its initial $20 million in seed funding but failed to build the audience and recurring revenue necessary for long-term sustainability. The organization produced excellent journalism, but strong journalism alone was not enough to support the business. There are many other examples, though most received far less funding and attention.

According to LION Publishers and the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN), two newer trade associations serving the new breed of digital news organizations, each organization has roughly 500 members. LION also estimates there are approximately 1,600 independent local news organizations across the U.S. and Canada, including nonprofit and for-profit digital publishers, so this segment is seeing some growth. We applaud the efforts of these organizations, many of whom are providing valuable journalism for their communities.

What we do not applaud is the lack of interest in supporting the local news organizations that still provide the overwhelming majority of local reporting in America.

Newspapers have spent decades adapting to changing technology, changing consumer habits, and changing business realities while continuing to produce the local reporting communities rely on every day. Many have invested aggressively in digital subscriptions, audience development, newsletters, video, podcasts, events, marketing services, philanthropy and other evolving business models. Innovation in local journalism did not begin with startups, and it is not happening only outside of newspapers.

Newspapers continue to employ thousands of journalists across the country, and millions of Americans still rely on them every day for local news and information. Their business model is unquestionably under pressure, but it has also proven more durable than many assume because newspapers typically operate with diversified revenue streams and longstanding relationships within the communities they serve. Some funders are reluctant to support newspapers because many operate as for-profit businesses. Yet communities benefit from local reporting regardless of ownership structure. If the goal is preserving journalism rather than choosing winners and losers, support should follow impact.

To be clear, we support the emergence of new local news organizations and genuinely hope they succeed. Strong local journalism, regardless of platform or ownership structure, benefits communities and democracy. But we also need to recognize reality: most of the original local reporting in this country is still being produced by newspapers.

If foundations, civic leaders and philanthropists truly care about preserving local news, they cannot focus exclusively on building new organizations while ignoring the institutions that are doing most of the work.

If you want to save local journalism in America, start by supporting your local newspaper.

Signed by America's Newspapers board of directors:

- Patrick Dorsey, publisher, Santa Fe New Mexican
- Alan Fisco, president and CEO, The Seattle Times
- Jeremy Gulban, CEO, CherryRoad Technologies
- PJ Browning, CEO, Evening Post Publishing, president and publisher, The Post & Courier
- Bradley Waters, owner and president, Sentinel Media Co.
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- Dean Ridings, president and CEO, America's Newspapers

America's Newspapers is an organization committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life. The organization puts an emphasis on educating the public on all the ways newspapers contribute to building a community identity and the role they play in the social and economic fabric of communities across the country. Learn more at newspapers.org.

OBITUARIES

John Andrew Stauffer

August 4, 1952 – May 13, 2026

John Andrew Stauffer, 73, passed away peacefully in Grand Rapids on May 13, 2026.

Born in South Bend, Indiana, he was the first child of the late Robert Bruce Stauffer and Mary Louise Beckman Stauffer, formerly of Niles. Along with his parents, he was also preceded in death by his younger sister, Carol Stauffer Bosler (Chuck). John grew up in Niles, Michigan surrounded by his musical family and began his life long journey as a percussionist with pans on the kitchen floor listening to his mother play the piano and then with his first garage band, The Stingrays, before he was a teenager. He was part of the superior drumline in the Niles High School band from '68-'70 and became well known locally, playing at teen dances with the Living End, Chicago Busload and Mijofirki Blues Band. It was a natural progression for John to attend the University of Michigan and earn a music degree, marching with the U of M band at the Rosebowl in 1972 and at Superbowl 7 in 1973 at the LA Memorial Coliseum. He would go back to Ann Arbor and march as a band alumni years later. John continued to play with the group Oasis after college and then any opportunity that arose later in life whenever he could.

After spending years in the Grand Rapids area working for the Kable News Company, John moved back to Niles and became the Director of the United Way of Greater Niles and took a turn as president of the Rotary Club. It was there, he married the former Michelle Hensler, who is left to remember him, along with his special dog, Pepper. After retiring, he and Michelle moved back to Grand Rapids. John is also survived by his son, Paul Stauffer of Grand Rapids and his two brothers, Tom Stauffer (Elizabeth) and Brian Stauffer (Lisa) both of California. Also surviving are his stepson, Robert Kuemin (KimMi) along with two grandsons, Evan and Miles Kuemin of Rockford, and nieces and nephews. John was most often found sitting at his grandpa's desk doing research or analyzing something. He was always amazed at the projects his wife would come up with but willingly calculated the details and was proud of what the two of them accomplished. He never wavered from his beliefs and was very loyal and honest as they come. He cared not much for material possessions, but was most happy with a glass of good red wine and a bowl of popcorn watching Michigan play football or the Cubs. John truly enjoyed golfing with his friends and kept years of score cards from these games, often reflecting on that one day when he finally beat his longtime friend, Bob. A celebration of John's life will be held in Niles on August 22, 2026 at The Embers at Signal Point Golf Club. Former bandmate, Mike Malone, will be officiating a brief service before a time of sharing and fellowship.

Nancy Louise 'Nan' Axelson

January 26, 1944 – June 3, 2026

Nancy Louise "Nan" Axelson, 82, of Wabash, Indiana, passed away on June 3, 2026, at Blair Ridge in Peru, Indiana, after a long battle with Alzheimer's.

Nan was born on January 26, 1944 in Belden, Indiana, a small community along the Wabash River in Wabash County, to Merlin and Dorothy Huston. Her formative years were spent in Laketon, Indiana. Attending Laketon High School through her sophomore year, she would go on to graduate from the Indiana Academy in Cicero, Indiana. After her high school graduation, she pursued a career in nursing. Graduating from Hinsdale Nursing Academy as a Registered Nurse, Nan Worked at Lee Memorial Hospital in Dowagiac, Michigan for over 40 years, eventually becoming a charge nurse, responsible for the hospital at night.

In 1972, as a young nurse, she fulfilled her long time goal of traveling through Europe. Originally planned with a fellow nurse who was stationed in Vietnam, she continued on undaunted by herself when her friend could not make the trip. She fell in love with England, returning throughout her life, often with friends or family. Nan met the love of her life, Robert Bruce Axelson in 1976. These were some of the happiest days of her life, ending way too soon with Bob's passing in 1984. As a widow, Nan became the pillar of her church, her family, and her friends. She moved back to Wabash in the mid 1990's to be with and care for her family, making the long commute to work each weekend.

Nan was a great lover of life and her passion for reading, writing, traveling, photography, hosting family get togethers, antiquing, women's jail ministry, and many other interests was an inspiration to all who knew her. While never having children on her own, she was as loving as an aunt as anyone could ever wish for. To so many of us, those are two of our favorite words, "Aunt Nancy."

She is survived by her nephews, John (Melissa) Huston of Wabash, and Jim (Kathleen) Williams of Beverly Hills, Michigan, and niece, Tricia (Dave Rueth) Duncan of Flora, Indiana, her sister, Karen Childers of Wabash, and her brother-in-law Jim Williams Sr. of Flora. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, and her sisters, Christina Williams and Patricia Huston.

Funeral services for Nancy will be held at 3:30 p.m., on Friday, June 12, 2026 at Grandstaff-Hentgen Funeral Service, 1241 Manchester Avenue, Wabash, with Pastor J.P. Freeman officiating. Friends may call from 1:30-3:30 p.m., Friday, at the funeral home. Graveside services and burial will be at 11:00 a.m., on Monday, June 15, 2026, at Rose Hill Cemetery, 10160 Rose Hill Road, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 49103. Preferred memorial is Alzheimer's Association.

The memorial guest book for Nancy may be signed at www.grandstaff-hentgen.com.

Mary Kathleen Regan

April 13, 1956 – May 30, 2026

With broken hearts we release our sister, mother and wife, Mary Kathleen Regan, to the Lord on May 30, 2026. Her beautiful smiling face, wit and devotion to family will be forever missed.

Mary Kathleen Regan was born on Friday the 13th of April 1956, the third child of Don and Bobbie Regan in Dowagiac, Michigan. Her happy childhood was spent in the center of many children enjoying Dewey Lake where summers were spent swimming, waterskiing and bike riding in total joy.

Kathleen attended Holy Maternity of Mary school and then graduated from Dowagiac Union High School where she participated as a cheerleader and had many friends.

She attended Central Michigan University for one year but then followed the family to Arlington Texas where she worked hard, eventually purchasing her own home. She missed Michigan and went back to work in the construction industry as a lighting expert walking new projects and selling electrical and lighting packages to builders. She retired after many years from Pine Tree Lighting in Lake Orion.

Kathleen married Mike Hover in 1995 and together they renovated their homes. Their last home was at Lake Metamora where they enjoyed so many friends on the lake, great parties and boat rides.

Family was most important to Kathleen, and she hosted large family gatherings at Lake Metamora every year or two. Kath is survived by her husband Mike, her daughter Holli (Mike) McEwan and two of her three grandchildren Madison McEwan and Sawyer Somers. She is also survived by her seven siblings and their families. She is preceded in death by her father and mother Don and Bobbie Regan and her beloved grandson, Cameron McEwan.

Services for Kathleen will be held Saturday June 20th at 11:00 at Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 51841 Leach Rd, Dowagiac, Michigan. She will be placed with our parents at Sacred Heart cemetery. We invite you to lunch and celebrate Kathleen's life at the parish hall immediately after.

Flowers can be sent directly to the church. Donations can be made to your local animal shelter or Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, MI.

Arrangements were entrusted to Clark Chapel – Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac, MI.

Those wishing to share a memory or leave condolences are invited to visit Kathleen's personalized webpage at www.clarkch.com.

She will be missed forever. We will never let her memory fade.

Cindra L. Mikel

September 15, 1941 – June 1, 2026

Cindra Lou Mikel, 84, of Cassopolis, died peacefully Monday, June 1, 2026.

Her life began September 15, 1941, in Plymouth, Indiana, the eldest of seven children born to Louis and Marybeth Null. She married Bobbie William "Bob" Mikel May 11, 1987 in Cassopolis, Michigan. After almost thirty years of marriage, he preceded her in death in 2017.

Cindra had a heart of gold; she was always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. She enjoyed being around people, which led her to working as a server and bartender for fifteen years. Her honesty about sharing her opinion with others was not something she was afraid to do; she did not care who she was talking to. Family meant a great deal to Cindra including her two beloved cats, Podunk and Mr. Kitty. She enjoyed spending time outdoors gardening, driving anywhere and everywhere, going on cruises, dancing, and playing her favorite card game, Euchre.

Cindra will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her children, Connie Lego of Marcellus, Larry Mikel of Three Rivers, Jeffrey (Julie) Davis of Edwardsburg; three granddaughters, Jennifer (Chris) Plencner, Toni, Jamie; and one step granddaughter, Vickie.

In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents; one granddaughter, Michelle Davis; and her son, Timothy Davis.

Family and friends will gather Wednesday, June 10, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. followed by a funeral service on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in Wagner Family Funerals, 202 North Broadway Street, Cassopolis.

Cindra will be laid to rest beside her beloved husband in Edwardsburg Cemetery.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Obituary policy

Leader Publications publishes death notices at a cost of $25, or free with obituary purchase. Extended obituaries are priced based on word count.

If there's an error because of a mistake made by the newspaper, the obituary will be reprinted at no charge.

For more information, or to submit an obituary, email obits@leaderpub.com.

U.S.-Canada bridge opening delayed over unresolved 'issues'

DETROIT (AP) — The opening of a Canadian-U.S. bridge across the Detroit River, which President Donald Trump had previously threatened to block, was delayed Thursday due to unresolved issues.

In a statement released before a scheduled Friday ribbon-cutting ceremony at the bridge, the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority said that "Canada and the United States have agreed to delay the opening of the bridge, taking the necessary time to resolve any outstanding issues." It didn't elaborate on what those issues are or how long the delay would last.

The 1.5-mile-long Gordie Howe International Bridge spans the Detroit River and connects the Motor City with Windsor, Ontario. The bridge is jointly owned by Canada and Michigan and was expected to open to traffic later this month.

But the opening had been thrown into question after Trump in February demanded in a social media post that Canada turn over at least half of the bridge's ownership to the U.S. federal government and agree to other unspecified demands in one of the Republican president's many salvos over cross-border trade issues.

Michigan officials and the White House had been in contact for months about the bridge following Trump's post, with the understanding that the opening would move forward Friday.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick pushed back on the opening, according to two people with knowledge of the matter who insisted on anonymity to discuss the private talks.

Even with the delay, officials remained optimistic that the bridge – a roughly $4.4 billion project – is still expected to open.

SMC OKs contract, adopts '27 budgets

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — At its regular monthly meeting on June 10, the Southwestern Michigan College Board of Trustees approved a three-year collective bargaining agreement reached with the faculty union and adopted budgets for fiscal year 2027.

The $30.7 million general fund for July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027, anticipates $13.4 million from tuition and fees, $8.5 million from property taxes on 2.3510 mills, $8.4 million in state appropriation and $0.4 million from other revenue.

The new faculty contract runs from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029, and includes base annual salary increases of 3 percent, with some seniority-based adjustments.

Board Chair Tom Jerdon said, "We value all of senior leadership's work on this undertaking since November and appreciate the professionalism of all parties involved. This new contract increases compensation not only for faculty, but all College employees will receive the same percentage increase, which has been the steadfast position of this Board, since all team members devote themselves to our students and campus community."

Photo provided

Trustee Beth Cripe presents Cross Country and Track and Field Head Coach Zac Sartori with his five-year service pin.

Trustee Beth Cripe presented Men's and Women's Cross Country and Track and Field Head Coach Zac Sartori with his five-year service pin.

Chief Marketing Officer Mike O'Brien introduced Sartori, who joined SMC in June 2021.

He is a former college runner at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville and Loyola University-Chicago. Sartori earned his bachelor's degree in kinesiology and his master's degree in sport and exercise psychology from Northern Illinois University.

Sartori served as the men's and women's volunteer assistant track and field and cross country coach at the University of Illinois at Chicago from 2013-16. He worked as the assistant boys' track and field and cross country coach at Lockport Township, Ill., High School from 2016-21 and also served as assistant men's and women's cross country and track and field coach at the College of DuPage.

At SMC, Sartori rebuilt cross country from scratch, with multiple top-20 finishes nationally on both the men's and women's sides, finishing second in Region XII on both sides in 2023.

Last season, the Roadrunner women won the MCCAA Western Conference. Owen Saylor finished 24th in the country, becoming SMC's 34th cross country All-American and 69th overall.

In addition to helping with the scoring table for volleyball and basketball, measuring and approving courses for Steve's Run and the fall Turkey Trot, this year he also ran point on reviving the men's and women's track and field teams, with two men, Luke Long and Maguire Johnson, qualifying for nationals in Hobbs, N.M., last month. The foundation is being built to grow that program into a regional contender.

Zac lives in Dowagiac with his wife, Kate, a physical therapist in Mishawaka and an SMC adjunct instructor.

"I've witnessed you mentoring students in our upward climb to success," Jerdon said. "It's really memorable because you were our very first fulltime coach" since SMC returned to intercollegiate athletics.

In his President's Report, Dr. Klint Pleasant said, "The team knocked it out of the park on summer enrollment – the highest headcount we've had since 2014. Fall, we're tracking about 11 percent ahead of this time last year. We've had 221 attend new-student orientations, compared to 192."

Housing demand remains high.

"We purchased an additional 20 bunk beds," Vice President for the Student Experience Katie Hannah said. "We have 440 applications as of yesterday, and we have 452 total beds."

Director of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Mick Valeris briefed trustees on how SMC guards against proliferating cybersecurity threats.

Trustees, who do not meet in July, also accepted one gift to the college for $140 and acknowledged 10 donations to the SMC Foundation totaling $34,512.34.

Court throws out conviction of man accused of secondary role in Whitmer kidnap plot

By ED WHITE
Associated Press

DETROIT — The Michigan Court of Appeals on Tuesday threw out the conviction of a man who was found guilty of a secondary role in a plot to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020.

Joe Morrison was convicted of providing material support for an act of terrorism and other charges. In a 3-0 ruling, the appeals court reversed the results on technical grounds, saying kidnapping is not an underlying violent felony that can support a conviction under Michigan's terrorism law.

Morrison, 32, has been in prison since 2022. He was given a minimum sentence of 10 years for three crimes, but the length was subsequently reduced to six years.

State Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, was livid about the appeals court decision, calling it "completely and irredeemably nonsensical, outrageous and irresponsible," and promised to take the case to the Michigan Supreme Court.

Morrison, Pete Musico and Paul Bellar were not charged with having a direct role in the plot to kidnap Whitmer. But they were members of a paramilitary group that trained with Adam Fox, a key figure who is serving a 16-year prison sentence after being convicted of conspiracy in federal court.

Deaths at prison spur calls for Whitmer to act

By JANELLE D. JAMES
Bridge Michigan

Federal and state lawmakers are calling on Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to intervene at Michigan's only women's prison after a third inmate in less than a month died Saturday, intensifying scrutiny over conditions and medical care at the Huron Valley Correctional Facility.

Ashley Hoath of Hillsdale County was rushed to Trinity Health Ann Arbor Hospital, about 15 minutes from the prison, where she was pronounced dead, Jenni Riehle, spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Corrections, confirmed in an email.

Earlier Saturday, an officer had noticed Hoath wasn't feeling well and promptly escorted her to a healthcare unit within the prison, where medical staff determined she needed to be sent to the hospital, according to Riehle.

The 36-year-old's death is the third inmate death since May 13. Khaira Howard, 28, died on May 13 and Rebecca Fackler, 57, died on May 17.

The deaths have prompted bipartisan calls for Michigan Department of Corrections Director Heidi Washington to resign.

And now, fellow Democrat and U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell is urging Whitmer to "direct every appropriate effort" to address concerns "raised repeatedly by women in custody, their families, advocates, attorneys, medical professionals, and the public."

"Too many continue to report that the underlying problems remain unsolved," Dingell wrote in a Monday letter to Whitmer. "It is essential that you give this issue your immediate attention and take urgent action to address the serious issues threatening the safety of these women under MDOC supervision."

The governor's office responded by repeating a statement first released in May, following the deaths of Rebecca Fackler and Khaira Howard:

"The health and safety of those under MDOC's supervision must always be their top priority," said Whitmer spokesperson Bobby Leddy.

"The governor has directed MDOC to conduct a swift, thorough, and transparent investigation. This process will include a careful assessment by an independent medical examiner. When this process is complete, we will release the results of the investigation. Families deserve to have the answers they need during the grieving process."

In a separate statement, Washington said MDOC is "working aggressively to investigate the circumstances that led up to Ms. Hoath being sent to the hospital."

"We ask the public, out of respect for the family, to refrain from speculation without the facts, while investigations are conducted. I can promise you that the community will have answers to what caused this death, and the ones that have preceded it."

Riehle, the MDOC spokesperson, said the department is working to "expedite the investigations into the recent deaths" at Huron Valley.

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OPINION

Everyone wants to think they're open-minded

Here's why most aren't

THE CONVERSATION

By DARYL VAN TONGEREN
Professor of Psychology,
Hope College (The Conversation)

Most people think they are open-minded and would like others to perceive them as such. But for the things that matter most – religious beliefs, for example, or the meaning of life – few of us are genuinely willing to consider that we might be wrong, let alone do the hard work of revising beliefs. At a fundamental level, we humans are somewhat closed-minded.

As a social psychologist, I research big questions, such as what makes life meaningful and the nature of humility. I've had a long-standing interest in why people are so resistant to changing their cherished core beliefs. After all, isn't it better to remain open-minded when you may be wrong or can't know for certain?

As decades of research has revealed, it turns out that our deepest convictions serve important psychological functions that make them hard to change. It's unsettling to admit that our core beliefs about how the world works may be wrong.

I call that openness "existential humility": a willingness to change our minds about our deepest convictions when presented with new evidence. And though holding beliefs in this way can be difficult, it can also be a bridge to creating stronger relationships and more inclusive communities.

Power of worldview

All of us hold myriad beliefs that range from the mundane to the magnificent. "Is pineapple a legitimate pizza topping?" is very different from "Is there life after death?" Yet these seemingly disparate beliefs are connected through an interlocking set of ideas and principles that help us make sense of ourselves and the world around us.

Psychologists call these sets of beliefs "worldviews," and they provide people with a sense of meaning in an otherwise confusing and chaotic world. They are a constellation of beliefs that shape what people value, view as important and perceive as morally right and wrong.

It's natural to take worldviews for granted, assuming that other intelligent people see the world the same way.

At the core of these worldviews reside your most cherished beliefs: who you are, what the meaning of life is, what constitutes right and wrong. Ask yourself how willing you are to revise those beliefs. How sure are you that you are right? What would it take to alter those convictions?

Probably a lot.

Cost of questioning

By answering these big, existential questions, worldviews can help manage anxiety. Strong convictions help people get through the day. For example, belief in an afterlife can thwart fear of mortality, because it denies that death is the end of existence.

A lack of certainty, on the other hand, can allow existential anxiety to creep in.

In 2022, my colleagues and I presented research participants with a list of existential topics and asked them to reflect on what they believed. We also asked them to rate how committed they were to their belief and how open they were to change.

Next, the participants assessed their anxiety and well-being. For example, they rated how much of a sense of meaning and purpose they had in their own lives, and how much peace, if any, they drew from religion.

Across several studies, including college students, adults and people who were significantly revising their religious beliefs, we found that being open to changing core convictions often comes at a cost to their well-being. For example, higher existential humility was associated with higher anxiety about death and a lower sense of meaning in life.

Two core needs

This research speaks to a broader paradox between two of humanity's deepest, and seemingly competing, motivations: certainty and curiosity. Both involve trade-offs.

On one hand, people desire conviction, which provides security. It feels good to believe that you have the answer to deep and consequential questions.

The downside of conviction, however, is that it often breeds intolerance: People can become so convinced they are right that they leave no room for other people's perspectives. Belief becomes a zero-sum game.

Even the mere existence of alternative viewpoints can feel threatening to some people with firm beliefs. To regain confidence in our own opinions, we might try to convince other people to change their mind, simply discount their perspective or try to eliminate their worldview altogether. Sadly, violence often stems from the desire to protect ideological convictions.

On the other hand, humans also desire growth. Curiosity drives people toward new discoveries and helps them stay open to changing their minds, should they encounter sufficiently strong evidence to do so.

But while this openness makes people tolerant, it also can make them prone to anxiety.

In other words, clinging to security about important beliefs provides intrapersonal benefits: The person who holds those beliefs feels a strong sense of meaning and safety. But it comes at an interpersonal cost: less tolerance for other people's viewpoints.

Conversely, a growth-focused openness makes people more tolerant and generous but can come with psychological costs.

Why and how

My research exploring existential humility offers critical insights about why it is so hard for people to change their minds.

Even the mere existence of alternative viewpoints can feel threatening to some people with firm beliefs. To regain confidence in our own opinions, we might try to convince other people to change their mind, simply discount their perspective or try to eliminate their worldview altogether. Sadly, violence often stems from the desire to protect ideological convictions.

Because people's worldviews comprise interlocking beliefs, admitting that they were wrong about something small means that they could also be wrong about something big. Rather than face that anxiety, people often double down on defensiveness.

Existential humility benefits other people in someone's life, from friends and neighbors to strangers. But it can take a psychological toll, and many people see these costs as too steep.

Given the benefits, though, I believe those costs are worth bearing.

Friedrich Nietzsche can offer wisdom here. In "Twilight of the Idols," the philosopher asserted, "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." The "why" of existential humility, I'd argue, is to become better neighbors, active participants in making this world a more loving place.

As for the how? Practice. There's no quick fix to become more open-minded. It requires developing tolerance for the feelings of distress that can come with not being sure. Over time, people adjust, becoming more comfortable with holding beliefs despite the possibility they might be wrong. We make peace with uncertainty – we befriend this tension.

Existential humility is hard to live out, but I believe that society needs it more than ever. Committing to practice this virtue may transform us and our communities. And that seems worth it to me.

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Social Justice Alliance of Cass County makes donation

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — A local organization is doing its part to serve the community.

The Social Justice Alliance of Cass County donated $1,156.95 each to Helping Hands of Cass County and to the Dr. TK Lawless Memorial Project.

The funds, generated from SJACC's Nelson's BBQ fundraiser last month, will help support Helping Hands' food pantry and the creation of a memorial for Dr. T.K. Lawless.

The Social Justice Alliance of Cass County (SJACC) is a collaborative body of individuals and organizations focused on elevating social justice and including public attitudes, policies/laws, and individual civil rights for the well being of Black people, other people of color, and county residents as large.

For SJACC co-founder Della Bundle, making a difference in the community through social justice is what the organization was created for.

"This shows that we're really walking out our purpose, because when we first organized, it was around the murder of George Floyd, and we didn't know how long we would last," Bundle said. "A lot of people jumped on the social justice bandwagon after that, but we're five years old now. We've been here, and partnering with Helping Hands to me was just a great opportunity to say, 'We're here. We're for all people,' because you say Helping Hands, people are like, 'Oh yes.' There's no bad thing ever said about Helping Hands. It's a great partnership."

Founded in Cassopolis in 1984, Helping Hands provides food, clothing, medicine, transportation funds, household items and, on occasion, support for utilities to residents of Cass County. According to Pantry Chairman Roger Leach, the donation will help the organization address the increased demand for food items in the community.

"We are definitely supplying a massive quantity of food to the people in Cass County and a few that are outside of Cass County as well, so we're thankful for our partners and our volunteers," Leach said.

Born in 1892, Lawless was one of the first physicians to use radium in the treatment of skin cancers and other diseases, for which he won the Harmon Medical Award in 1929. He worked to find cures for leprosy and syphilis and was noted for his equal treatment of patients regardless of race or class.

Dr. T.K. Lawless Park was named in his honor.

"Contributing to the T.K. Lawless Memorial is something that has not been done in the past. So I think it's historic in itself, and a really good purpose," said SJACC co-founder Julie Dye.

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From left: Helping Hands President Joan Murphy, Pantry Chairman Roger Leach, SJACC co-founders Julie Dye and Della Bundle.

"Many people don't know who he was, or that he was an African-American dermatologist – and I had no idea – so now there will be a memorial to the man who dedicated his life and made sure that the land got to Cass County as best he could," Bundle added.

For more information, visit socialjusticecass.org.

Cass County Land Bank nearing completion on new apartments

SUBMITTED

CASS COUNTY — As hundreds of people visited downtown Cassopolis for the Village's Beach Bash celebration, many caught a glimpse of just one of the Cass County Land Bank Authority's recent redevelopment projects nearing completion at 117 S. Broadway St.

Once complete, the building will provide seven new housing units in downtown Cassopolis, including five one-bedroom apartments and two two-bedroom apartments. The apartments will be available to households earning 80 percent or less of the Area Median Income (AMI), helping address the growing need for attainable housing in Cass County.

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

The main floor will be available for future commercial development.

The project represents the transformation of a long-vacant building into a productive community asset. After several years of private marketing efforts failed to result in redevelopment, the property remained partially vacant and underutilized in the heart of downtown Cassopolis (the building's main floor has sat vacant since 2015, while the upper floor has been vacant since 2020).

The Land Bank's involvement provided an opportunity to leverage resources that would not otherwise have been available to the project, which is being paid for with state redevelopment funding specifically designated for blight elimination and community revitalization projects. Through the redevelopment effort, the upper floor is being converted into housing, while the main floor will be available for future commercial development, creating opportunities for additional investment and economic activity in downtown Cassopolis.

"The Land Bank saw an opportunity to invest in a building right here in our county seat and, in turn, address a need we hear about constantly throughout our community: the need for workforce housing," said Hope Anderson, Cass County Treasurer and Chair of the Cass County Land Bank Authority. "This project is about bringing a vacant building back to life while creating new housing opportunities for residents and supporting the continued revitalization of downtown."

The project builds upon the Land Bank's previous success with the State Land Bank Authority's Blight Elimination Program, which has funded projects including the stabilization of the former Tailgater building in Marcellus, the demolition of the former Lincoln School in Dowagiac, and the demolition of the former People's Protestant Church in Cassopolis, among others.

Through the fourth round of the program, the Cass County Land Bank was awarded $2,732,950 to support redevelopment efforts at 117 S. Broadway, along with an additional $500,000 in façade improvement funding.

While the building was for sale, deferred maintenance and continued vacancy contributed to the property's deterioration. Prior to acquisition, the property was independently appraised at approximately $750,000 and had a Fair Market Value determination of approximately $900,000. The Land Bank purchased the property for $600,000, which was below both valuation benchmarks, helping preserve additional state grant resources for rehabilitation and redevelopment activities.

The redevelopment of 117 S. Broadway reflects the Land Bank's mission to return vacant, underutilized, and deteriorating properties to productive use. By combining local leadership with state redevelopment resources, the project is transforming a building that had experienced years of vacancy into a community asset that will provide housing opportunities, support downtown revitalization, and generate future economic activity for Cass County residents.

The project is expected to be completed later this summer. Leasing information will be released as apartments become available.

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Township approves data center moratorium

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — Niles Charter Township leadership has taken a stance on the controversial subject of data center development.

The NCT Board of Trustees, during its June 1 meeting, approved a moratorium of 12 months on the granting of permits for data centers in the township. The NCT Planning Commission moved to begin the process of amending the zoning ordinance to impose a moratorium on data centers during its June 9 meeting at Township Hall.

Township Supervisor Marge Durm-Hiatt said the data center moratorium will give the township planning commission some breathing room as it begins the process of amending its current zoning ordinance. The planning commission believes that pursuing its own moratorium will help to better protect the township, which has also begun work on updating its master plan that will guide future land use and development.

"It just allows us to not accept any applications until a year from now so we can research and find out what's going on," said Township Supervisor Marge Durm-Hiatt. "It's a big topic right now and most townships are doing moratoriums in order to figure things out. You're not going to come in and steamroll over us. We're gonna be ready for you when you come, or if you come. And maybe they won't."

Zoning Administrator Denise Kasprzak said that a public hearing on the proposed zoning amendment will be held during the planning commission's July 14 meeting to allow input from community members. From there, the proposed ordinance amendment will advance to the Berrien County Planning Commission for review. The Niles Township Planning Commission would then take into consideration the results of the county planning commission's review to decide whether to recommend the ordinance amendment for the township board's approval.

"It goes to the board, and the board votes on it," Kasprzak said. "They can either approve it, deny it, or send it back to the Planning Commission because they want something changed in it. The final vote is done through the board, but it takes about 60 days to have this happen, so we don't want to wait any longer. We want to get this going and to protect our community from the unknown or the known as much as we can, to move this forward."

Kasprzak said the entire zoning amendment process will take approximately 60 days.

"We can research, we can get public input, see what the good is, see what the bad is, see where they're going to go, and see where they're not going to go," she said. "Whether you live in Niles Township or just on the edge of Niles Township, this is a concern for everybody and we take this seriously."

Meijer scraps plans to build new store in Niles Charter Township

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — After months of negotiations and planning, Meijer has called it quits on building a new store in Niles Charter Township.

According to NCT Supervisor Marge-Durm Hiatt, Meijer rescinded its offer to develop property for a Meijer supercenter and other potential development projects at the intersection of Niles-Buchanan Road and Morris Drive in Niles Township. The company had been pursuing a rezoning of the property to allow the project to begin.

Durm-Hiatt said that Meijer rescinded its offer because it is shifting its focus to opening stores in larger markets like Ohio.

"We were a smaller project for them," she said. "They're moving into other areas like Ohio and Pennsylvania. They said they're not totally ruling out that they wouldn't look at us again but they do five stores a year, and right now, they're being aggressive in larger areas. They invested a lot of money in the township just getting to where they got to. They did some studies of the water, the engineering, the layout. They had done a lot of work, and so they're just putting it on the back burner."

The proposed Meijer project was met with both support and resistance by members of the community. Residents in favor of the project were eager for the prospect of jobs, development and goods the store would have brought and others voiced concerns ranging from traffic congestion, environmental and stormwater impacts to possible safety hazards, increased crime and decline in property values.

While Meijer may not be moving to the township anytime soon, Durm-Hiatt said they even consider coming back but that doesn't mean that we're not going to move forward with rezoning part of that area with the master plan. It makes sense that it should the township may still decide to rezone part of that area to allow for development as it begins work to update its master plan.

"It'll be five years before be zoned highway business. How far down it goes or how much of it we do that to is the planning Commission and the people when we start working on the master plan."

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Michigan found a way to reduce school vaccine waivers – until it backfired

By KATE WELLS
KFF Health News (TNS)

PORT HURON — State health officials urged parents in several counties to vaccinate babies against measles ahead of schedule this spring as cases multiplied in Michigan. The outbreaks of the highly contagious virus – which can lead to brain swelling, deafness, and death – came as parents are opting school-age kids out of vaccinations at a record-high rate.

It's a situation state officials have spent more than a decade trying to avoid. For years, they've been trying to make it harder for parents to send their kids to school unvaccinated.

But those efforts have backfired in places like St. Clair County, in Michigan's conservative Thumb region. Remington Nevin, the county's medical director, has declared "a new era of vaccine choice." Local parents there can now bypass the usual protocols and get school vaccine waivers via email, days after they fill out a brief digital form.

NEVIN

State health officials aren't fighting it.

In fact, Michigan's health agency has been helping more than 30 counties move away from a state policy once credited with sharply reducing the number of parents who opted their kids out of shots.

In 2015, the state started requiring parents seeking waivers to first attend a vaccine education session, in person, at their local health department.

But in the post-COVID era, local health officials say, the sessions became hostile, ineffective, and sometimes even unsafe for staff. One high school called police last fall over an escalating dispute with parents who refused to obtain a state-recognized waiver for their children, with a sheriff's deputy warning the parents that they could face criminal charges.

In response, the state has helped create a hybrid waiver process for dozens of counties, allowing parents to take a brief vaccine education course online while still requiring they get their waivers signed in person. It's part of a broader shift in strategy in a state that had some of the most polarizing and politically divisive COVID restrictions.

At Michigan schools where only 30 percent to 40 percent of students are now vaccinated, it is "simply not possible to keep diseases like measles at bay," said Natasha Bagdasarian, the state's chief medical officer. "And when one of these measles cases ends up in a low-immunization community, that's when the ember really has a chance to expand and become a wildfire."

A short-lived success story

In 2014, Michigan had the fourth-highest vaccine waiver rate in the country.

Health officials suspected some parents were just signing waivers during the stress of school registration, not because of a deeply held conviction.

"'Oops, I forgot to do this. I'm just going to sign a waiver and be done with it,'" said Norm Hess, executive director of the Michigan Association for Local Public Health. "That's not really the way we want parents to make decisions on this issue."

Around that time, national headlines were focused on a Disneyland-linked measles outbreak in which 131 people were infected. California cracked down, becoming the first state in decades to end nonmedical vaccine waivers.

With Republicans then in control of the Michigan Legislature and governor's office, health officials found a side door. They created an administrative rule saying nonmedical waivers required certification by the local health department "that the individual received education on the risks of not receiving the vaccines being waived and the benefits of vaccination to the individual and the community."

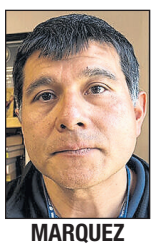
"We were not aware of the rule until the day it happened," Suzanne Waltman, president of Michigan for Vaccine Choice, later told PBS News. "We thought it was a stealth move."

At first, it seemed to work. Kindergarten waiver rates dropped by 32 percent in 2015. "Kids were protected more from these vaccine-preventable diseases," Hess said.

But after that year, waiver rates started rebounding. When the pandemic hit five years later, immunization rates plunged.

'An unsafe setting' for medical staff

Juan Marquez is the medical director of a county where a measles outbreak sickened several people this spring, but even he wouldn't want to do those in-person sessions again.


MARQUEZ

"It was really creating an unsafe setting, actually, for our nurses," said Marquez, the medical director for two counties, Livingston and Washtenaw, just west of Detroit.

"Our nurses are just trying to do their job," Marquez said. "And you can imagine, to have somebody yell at you or just say not nice things to your face and sit through that for hours is demoralizing."

Washtenaw has had seven measles cases since March and is believed to be the source of an eighth case in a neighboring county. As of May 28, the state had a total of 14 cases this year.

Since the start of the pandemic, waiver requests in Michigan have been increasing.

Some parents felt it was demeaning to have to go in for counseling sessions they perceived as judgmental.

Republican state Rep. Jennifer Wortz, who represents a district along the state's southern border, recalled her session, speaking at a vaccine choice rally in Lansing last year. "I had a very negative experience there, simply because we made decisions as parents and did the research and made the choices that we felt were best for each one of our children."

Of the 10,000 vaccine waivers Marquez's counties have given out in the past 10 years, he said, the education sessions changed the minds of maybe one or two people.

"If we're not changing folks' minds, can we do this in a safe way?" Marquez said. "So that was really the idea behind the hybrid model."

The workaround

At first, state immunizations director Ryan Malosh thought dropping the in-person requirement was a bad idea.

He was skeptical when Livingston County health officials said they wanted to replace in-person sessions with a 20-minute online course about the benefits of vaccines and the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

State health department staffers were worried that if the waiver process became more convenient, more people would get exemptions, which could lead to more outbreaks. And because parents could get a waiver from any local health department, people from across the state might start flooding Livingston County with requests.

"We were worried that this could be sort of a sinkhole," Malosh said.

It wasn't. Parents took the online course, then made an appointment at the health department to get their nonmedical waivers signed. Waiver rates increased in Livingston County, but at the same rate they were rising in the rest of the state.

So the state turned to the University of Michigan to create a standardized, online course that any county could use. Parents would go through a 20- to 30-minute course, answering questions about the content, and then be able to get their waivers signed at their local health department office.

Michael Rubyan, a public health associate professor at the university, worked with some 40 public health nurses from throughout the state to design it. They wanted it to be simple and fact-based: Here's what you should know about these diseases. Here's how vaccines work. And if there is an outbreak at your school, your kids may have to stay home if they're not vaccinated.

No judgment. No pressure.

This needed to be a building block in a much longer relationship with local public health, the nurses said. And while this change alone probably won't lead to a dramatic decrease in waivers, Malosh said, it may start to rebuild some trust. "That then opens the door for further conversations, which maybe then gets these folks vaccinated," he said.

Hybrid may not be enough

About a third of the state's counties have adopted the hybrid approach, but the waiver system is still creating confusion and conflict.

Last fall, a dispute over the waiver process involving a St. Clair County family blew up into a local controversy, and school officials asked local law enforcement to get involved.

Although the family lived in St. Clair, the children attended high school in neighboring Macomb County. Macomb had already switched to the hybrid model, but the parents didn't want to file the documents, because they didn't want their children's vaccination status to be known by local health officials at all.

At one point during the ongoing conflict, school officials asked the sheriff's department to intervene. A deputy's conversation with the students' father on Nov. 5 was captured in body-camera footage obtained by KFF Health News through a public records request.

The deputy described the counseling requirement as a set of "stupid hoops."

"I know it's super inconvenient to go into the health department, go through their stupid 10-minute class for them to tell you something you already know, to sign the waiver," the deputy said.

But the deputy went on to warn the father that if they continued taking their kids to school, despite being repeatedly informed they couldn't be enrolled without a state-recognized waiver, then they could be charged with contributing to the truancy of minors.

The clash became a local cause célèbre. Nevin, the St. Clair medical director, seized on it – and the state's falling immunization rates – at a public health board meeting as proof that people who mistrust the state's public health establishment "have sound reasons for doing so."

So far, state health officials have declined to engage in verbal or legal conflict with Nevin, who has drawn cheers and jeers at public meetings over his vaccine stance. He has also been the subject of internal workforce complaints at the county health department.

Instead, state officials are stressing the importance of parents understanding the risks that vaccine-preventable diseases, like measles, pose for their kids.

"Local health departments get to decide for themselves in a lot of ways what's best for their residents," Malosh said. "And I think that what's best is to be as upfront as possible, to be as truthful as possible, and to try to give the best information that we have available to us to parents so that they can actually make an informed decision."

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Company to celebrate 10th anniversary

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Photo provided

Dave, Brian, Jerry and Joe Morin stand outside Sister Lakes Brewing Co.

SISTER LAKES — A Sister Lakes staple is celebrating 10 years of serving up brews on Round Lake.

Sister Lakes Brewing Company, 92500 Co Rd., Dowagiac, will raise a glass to 10 years in business Saturday, June 20 with its annual JamFest to be headlined by Chicago jam band Mr. Blotto and opener, David Gans and the Broken Angels. Free family-friendly activities will also run from 1 to 4 p.m. until the event begins at 5 p.m. Early Bird tickets are available for $15 until April 15, increasing to $20 leading up to the event.

"This festival is the culmination of the last ten years – a time to reflect on and commemorate all the good times, challenges, and lessons learned," said Brian Morin, who owns the brewery with his dad, Jerry, and brothers, Dave and Joe. "We want to throw an all-out bash with the music we love in order to celebrate with our customers, employees, friends and family who have supported us over the last ten years, and hopefully make some new friends who will be with us as we springboard into the next decade of adventures."

To compliment the live music, the fest will also hold a tie-dye workshop, vendors and more. In addition to its craft beer, Sister Lakes Brewing also features craft cocktails, a full food menu and an outdoor beer garden.

According to Morin, his family's passion for craft beer began with homebrewing.

"We started out as home brewers, just brewing in our kitchen and our garage and got really into the hobby. We all had different careers doing different things, living in different parts of the country, and we came together to open the business. We bought an old hardware store here at Sister Lakes in 2015, spent about a year renovating it ourselves to get it all ready and we opened in June of 2016."

Morin said that the family's strong ties to Sister Lakes made choosing a location easy. His great-grandfather was a fruit farmer in the area and built a small cottage on Round Lake in 1937.

"My grandma grew up spending her time in Sister Lakes, my dad, all of us, and now our children are the fifth generation on Round Lake," he said. "So we have a lot of history in the area and that was the easiest decision we made was where it was going to be."

The onset of the COVID pandemic impacted businesses nationwide and SLBC was no exception. Morin said the community's support has allowed the business to adapt and overcome the obstacles in its way.

"The biggest thing I would say is we focus on our community," he said. "We're not trying to be this big mega brewery that services the whole state or the whole country; we're really focused on creating an environment here in our taproom. It's been really great to see over 10 years the relationships that have formed amongst customers. We've had weddings here, all kinds of events, and memorial services. This is the place when people want to get together with their family, this is the place they think about."

While the Morin family enjoys crafting new brews, creating a gathering space and giving back to the community is what SLBC is all about.

"We do all kinds of community-oriented stuff like working with the local volunteer fire department. The Dowagiac District Library hosts their monthly book club in our space. The Drift Skippers local snowmobile club has had their home here for many years where they have their meetings. So just creating that space for people to gather is key. When we got started, we said, 'Why are we even doing this?' We love beer, but it's really because we wanted to provide something for the community."

10 years after its founding, SLBC remains a family affair for the Morins. Morin is proud to see his business reach a storied milestone.

"It's pretty amazing. We have a lot of pride in what we've been able to accomplish," Morin said. "Thinking about how the landscape has changed over the last 10 years – changes in the craft beer industry, going through a pandemic – there have been so many challenges, but really so much joy and so much we've been able to accomplish, and we're really proud of that."

PROJECT

From page A1

Photo courtesy of Ambrosia Neldon

Hundreds of visitors attended Cassopolis' Beach Bash in downtown Cassopolis last weekend.

Alexis O'Flynn, Village President David Johnson, and 36th District State Representative Stephen Carra.

"Public service often requires long days, long nights, missed dinners, interrupted weekends, social media accusations, and sacrifices not only made by employees, but their families as well," Johnson said. "Public service is not for the faint of heart."

Johnson went on to thank numerous members of the village staff and police department by name for their contributions to the project. Other speakers thanked a variety of organizations that provided grants and expertise for the project.

LaGrow noted the nearby Pioneer Log Cabin Museum, comparing the determination of those first settling in Cassopolis to that of those working to grow the village today.

"The truth is growth is hard, change is hard, progress is hard," she said. "It's much easier to leave things exactly as they are than it is to imagine something better and then do the work required to make it happen. But communities do not become great by standing still. And, perhaps more importantly, communities do not get to be great just once. You have to be great every day."

The village manager encouraged those present to continue dreaming, investing, and improving their community.

A tour of the site was canceled due to the weather and Beach Bash festivities were moved indoors, but several attendees still explored the beach area after the event.

Dowagiac man injured in single-vehicle Silver Creek Township crash

By PMG STAFF

A Dowagiac man was injured in a single vehicle crash Thursday in Silver Creek Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 6:26 a.m., deputies responded to a single vehicle crash in the area of M-152 and W. Bay Drive in Silver Creek Township.

The investigation showed that a vehicle driven by 58-year-old Douglas Gerstner, of Dowagiac, was northbound on M-152 when he lost control, causing his vehicle to strike into a utility pole. Douglas Gerstner was transported by SMCAS to Cordwell Health in St. Joseph for injuries sustained in the traffic accident.

Assisting agencies on scene were SMCAS, and Sister Lakes Fire Department.

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Dowagiac falls to Vicksburg 4-1 in regional semifinals

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BATTLE CREEK — The Dowagiac softball team's season came to an end Saturday in the Division 2 regional semifinals.

The Chieftains fell 4-1 to Vicksburg in eight innings at Harper Creek High School in Battle Creek.

"We battled hard," said Dowagiac coach Mike Behnke. "We gave ourselves opportunities to win the game. We had to make basic plays and do the little things and came up short."

Pitchers Bree Campbell and Allison Truckey put on a show in the circle to help keep the game scoreless through five innings. Vicksburg opened the scoring in the sixth after Alyssa Smith hit a sacrifice fly to score one run. Dowagiac's Charleigh Reed responded with a triple to center field which helped Dowagiac tie the game at one in the bottom of the sixth with a Marlie Carpenter run.

Tied 1-1 in the bottom of the eighth inning, Vicksburg's Lena Lancaster scored Kayla Chisolm home by drawing a walk. Moments later, Harper Roy singled moments later to bring Smith and Lancaster home to make it 4-1.

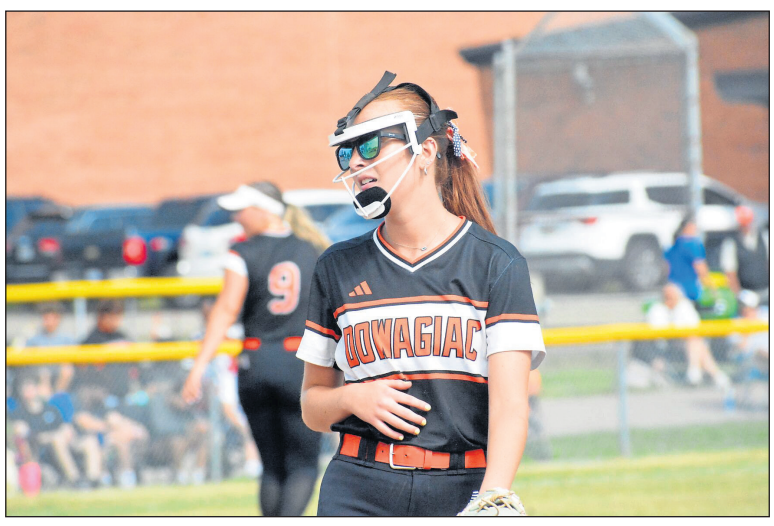
"It started with an error there and then just kind of snowballed from there," Behnke said. "That was pretty much our season there, that little blip that just barely falls out of the reach of the infield. I can't tell you how many of those have been hit this year that people don't hit real hard too much and it's just those darn dinkers that just fall in to get the two more insurance runs for them, so it's kind of how it goes sometimes."

Allison Truckey earned the win for Vicksburg, striking out 13 and giving up four hits and one run over eight innings with zero walks. Roy had one hit and two RBIs for Vicksburg while Makenzie Rooney, Alyssa Smith, Kayla Chisholm and Makenzie Rose each tallied one hit.

Claire Hess, Olivia McIntosh, Charleigh Reed and Bree Campbell each collected one hit for the Chieftains, with Reed adding an RBI. In the circle, Campbell struck out 14 batters, allowed five hits and four runs over eight innings while walking four.

Photos by Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Marlie Carpenter celebrates after scoring a run against Vicksburg in Saturday's Division 2 regional semifinal at Harper Creek High School in Battle Creek.



The Chieftains end the season with a 27-12 record, which included their second straight conference title and the first district title in 20 years. Dowagiac will graduate a trio of program pillars in Marlie Carpenter, Addison Wilson and Bryanna Behnke. When asked what he will remember most about this team, Behnke said the family dynamic was special.

"Just the amount of time that we've spent together, the family that we have become and the lifelong friends and family that we will be," Behnk said. "It's the fact that they work hard, they battled, they battled through injuries. I can't tell you how many nagging injuries we had throughout the year and girls battled through them and did the best that they could."

Like the seniors, Saturday's game was also the last for Behnke, who is retiring after 30 years teaching at his alma mater and winning more than 400 games over 22 years as the head softball coach.

For Behnke, representing his alma mater as a player, teacher and coach is among his greatest honors.

"It means the world to me. I bleed orange and black, that's for sure," Behnke said. "I'm proud to say I'm a Chieftain, I'm proud to say I'm from Dowagiac and it's just been great for me to be able to come back and I feel great for anyone else who I've taught or coached."

VICKSBURG 4, DOWAGIAC 1

Vicksburg	000	001	03	—	4	5	1
Dowagiac	000	001	00	—	1	4	3

WP – A. Truckey 13k. LP – B. Campbell 14k.
Top hitters – Vicksburg: H. Roy 1b, 2 RBI; A. Smith 1b, RBI; M. Rose 1b; K. Chisholm 1b; M. Rooney 1b. Dowagiac: C. Reed 1b, RBI; O. McIntosh 1b; C. Hess 1b; B. Campbell 1b.

WMU's Tighe is honored by MAC

PMG STAFF

CLEVELAND — Caitllin Tighe named to the 2026 Softball Academic All-Mid-American Conference Team Tuesday afternoon.

TIGHE

The former Edwardsburg standout was one of 10 members of the Western Michigan softball team named to the team. To qualify for the Academic All-MAC Team, a student-athlete must have at least a 3.20 cumulative GPA and have participated in at least 50 percent of the contests scheduled or completed in the particular sport. First-year students and any transfer players in their first year of residence are not eligible for the award.

The 10 selections by the Broncos were tied for fifth-most in the conference.

Tighe, a junior shortstop working toward a degree in Business Analytics, sports a 3.81 cumulative GPA. She earned Second Team All-MAC honors following a breakout season at the plate for the Broncos. She led the WMU in multiple categories during conference play, including runs scored (21), hits (34), home runs (5), slugging percentage (.674) and sacrifice flies (3).

Tighe ranked sixth in the MAC for sacrifice bunts (3), fourth in sacrifice flies, 11th in hits and slugging percentage, 14th in batting average and home runs and 17th in runs scored.

Williams gives credit to Johnson as Bears QB gets better

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — Being on the cover of "Madden NFL 27" and becoming more of a national celebrity after leading the Chicago Bears to seven comeback wins last season have failed to turn the head of quarterback Caleb Williams.

At least that's what Williams believes, and as Chicago's minicamp ended Thursday, the third-year quarterback said there are good reasons for it. Possibly the main one is his coach, Ben Johnson.

"There's so much to unlock, there's so much to get better at, there's so much left of ball for me and us and accolades that we'll have as a team and things like that," Williams said Thursday.

See **BEARS**, page B2

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Nam Y. Huh / AP

Chicago Bears defensive back Coby Bryant looks on during the team's practice in Lake Forest, Ill., on Wednesday.

Bryant brings fiery intensity to new-look secondary for Bears

By JAY COHEN
Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Coby Bryant was named after the Los Angeles Lakers guard. Being competitive, well, it was destiny.

"I'm a true competitor," he said. "I don't care if it's walking down the street, I want to walk faster than somebody else. I don't care what it is."

Bryant's fiery intensity is part of a new-look secondary for the Chicago Bears after the safety signed a $40 million, three-year contract with the team in free agency. The 27-year-old Bryant was a key member of Seattle's dominant defense last season, helping the Seahawks to the franchise's second Super Bowl championship.

Chicago also selected safety Dillon Thieneman in the first round of the NFL draft and cornerback Malik Muhammad in the fourth round. Defensive back Cam Lewis signed a two-year contract with the Bears in March, while safeties Kevin Byard and Jaquan Brisker departed in free agency.

"A great group of guys, honestly," Bryant said of his new team. "I'm still getting to know everyone, but just being here a short amount of time has been special, honestly. We laugh. We put in a lot of work. Guys are willing to work, like I said. It's been fun. It's going to be a great year, for sure."

While the secondary has a handful of newcomers, cornerback Jaylon Johnson is back. The 27-year-old Johnson, a two-time Pro Bowler, was limited by a groin injury last season, but he had two interceptions on Tuesday on the first day of mandatory minicamp.

"I think his mind is probably getting more confident in terms of the movements he's making," coach Ben Johnson said Wednesday. "So yeah, he's a vital part of what we want to do. You know he's been a Pro Bowl-caliber player in the past and hopefully we can get that out of him again this year."

Bryant had a career-high four interceptions last season after picking off three balls in 2024. He missed the final two regular-season games because of a knee injury and returned in the playoffs.

Chicago went 11-6 last year and won the NFC North. It edged the Green Bay Packers in a wild-card game before losing an overtime thriller to the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round.

With the Bears looking to take another step forward in their second year under coach Ben Johnson, Bryant has been asked a couple of times about winning the Super Bowl.

"The biggest thing is I tell them, you know, just take it one day at a time, one play at a time, one game at a time," Bryant said. "I try not to use my past – what I did in Seattle – with these guys. The biggest thing I came here to do is be a leader and, you know, direct these guys and lead these guys and vice versa."

Bryant, who had an interception against Caleb Williams during Wednesday's practice, is expected to serve as a key resource for the speedy Thieneman during his transition to life in the NFL. Bryant was selected by Seattle in the fourth round of the 2022 draft out of the University of Cincinnati.

"He's a rookie, so he wants to go full speed in everything," Bryant said. "In individual drills, we have to tell him to slow down because I'm not running that fast. I'm 27. He's 21. Just the speed. He's very coachable, like I said. He's exciting to watch, man. He makes plays every day. It's been special."

BEARS

From page B1

"And then having a good support system around me, having Ben and my teammates and things like that I got to look in the face and make sure I'm doing the right thing every single day to accomplish our goal."

Johnson's tough love last year in training camp and the offseason helped Williams transition well to a new offense in his second season despite a poor 58.1 percent completion rate. Going through last year with Johnson has the Bears QB feeling miles ahead of where the team started in 2025 with a season-opening loss to the Vikings.

"It's a hell of a lot more fun for me than it was last year just because it was – I was saying it to (running backs Eric Studesville), 'I feel like I was drowning trying to breathe or stay alive and wait for a boat to come around last year,'" Williams said. "Now this year it's being able to start where we finished last year, play calls and words and verbiage and speak the same language and now it's being able to grow more from an earlier stage than maybe doing it a little bit earlier in the season or halfway through the season, speaking on things that really help throughout the year.

"That's the advantage."

Johnson has been giving Williams daily letter grades during the offseason. The main goal is for him to improve his accuracy, which fell well short of last season's announced goal of a 70 percent completion rate.

"Ball placement, being able to put the ball in the best position for the wide receivers, first starts with a completion and then from there you grow in the confidence from completing the ball, completion, completion, completion, and then it grows to, how can I place the ball better for these guys in these situations and moments throughout the games and practices?" Williams said. "It starts in practice. It starts with the mindset of that, and then from there you keep growing.

"Another thing for me is just always getting better with procedure, being able to see defenses pre-snap and having an idea of what they'll be in or if I need to make an adjustment. It's always going to be those couple things for me."

How does Williams' coach think he's he doing at all of this?

"It's been OK," Johnson said.

Johnson gave every player three points of emphasis for the summer before they left Halas Hall. He didn't want to share exactly what they were, but it's not difficult to imagine Williams' are targeted toward accuracy.

Johnson also is not worried about Williams getting caught up in everything going on in his life off the field, like being the Madden cover boy.

"Well, it goes back to my first conversations I've had with Caleb and those were he wants to win here in Chicago and he wants to win Super Bowls," Johnson said. "That's really his motivating factor. He's been very clear and consistent with that message over the last year and a half that I've gotten to know him."

Williams called his relationship with Johnson a reason he stays grounded and has progressed.

"I think getting to the point now there's times where he'll be saying something and it's full agreeance and kind of finish his sentence on some of these things on his mentality and how he wants to win, how he wants to play and who our identity is going to be and being able to build towards that," Williams said. "He's obviously a lot more mature than me. He's older than me by many years.

"So he brings a lot of wisdom to me. He notices things that I may not notice in the moment or things like that. So his information, his knowledge, his wisdom and things like that, it goes a long way for me and I'm 110 percent in on whatever he says."

Nam Y. Huh / AP

Chicago Bears quarterback Caleb Williams works on the field during the team's practice in Lake Forest, Ill., on Tuesday.

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MLB's hitters struggle to thrive after turning 35

By DAVID BRANDT
AP Baseball Writer

Paul Beaty / AP

Houston Astros' Christian Walker looks to the dugout after hitting a three-run home run against the Chicago Cubs in Chicago on May 24.

PHOENIX — Nolan Arenado was slugging his way through the month of May when the Arizona Diamondbacks third baseman woke up one morning with an ailment that's familiar to those who felt invincible in their 20s but have advanced to their mid-to-late 30s.

His back hurt.

Not bad. Not enough to keep him out of the lineup. But it was one of those inexplicable moments that comes with being an aging Major League Baseball player – threatening to derail a hot streak for an eight-time All-Star who just turned 35.

"There's more aches and pains," Arenado said. "There's just a little more work in the gym, getting prepared for the game, than there used to be. That's a learning curve.

"I've always been in the gym, always did that stuff, but there's definitely more maintenance."

Arenado got past the minor back issue and is continuing a bounce-back season in the desert, batting .256 with eight homers and 30 RBIs through Monday's games. He's among a group of the 35-and-older crowd getting solid results at the plate, joining Los Angeles Dodgers veterans Freddie Freeman and Max Muncy, along with Houston's Christian Walker.

But it's a small club that's become smaller over the past decade.

Most MLB hitters who are 35 or older are only having decent seasons, continuing a trend that's accelerated over the past decade.

In the early 2000s, older stars were the norm in the big leagues. It peaked in 2003 when older hitters did well, with a group highlighted by Barry Bonds, Frank Thomas, Kenny Lofton, Luis Gonzalez and Jeff Bagwell.

So what's changed?

Let's look at some of the reasons why MLB is skewing younger this days:

Analytics like younger players

Baseball's analytical era can be traced back to the work of Bill James in the 1970s and 1980s.

Suddenly, the eye test wasn't enough for MLB general managers. Cold, hard numbers were in.

And – overwhelmingly – those numbers showed that the best years for a big league hitter usually come from their mid-20s to early 30s.

That's directly correlated to MLB teams locking up young players to long-term contracts. Arizona's Corbin Carroll, Detroit's Kevin McGonigle, Pittsburgh's Konnor Griffin, Kansas City's Bobby Witt Jr. and Seattle's Julio Rodriguez are among dozens of promising players who were signed to lucrative deals well before they reach free agency.

Spending on veterans is no longer in vogue. Walker – a three-time Gold Glove first baseman who has hit nearly 200 career homers – signed with the Astros for a relatively modest $60 million, three-year deal after the 2024 season when he was 33 years old.

"I think it has a lot to do with the ability to measure guys' value on the field," Walker said. "So, you went off of the optics or this guy's a good clubhouse guy or he's got experience, he's been to a World Series."

Velocity has exploded during their careers

Today's young stars have come of age in a game where velocity is king, but it wasn't that way when Freeman and others broke through. The average MLB fastball in 2026 is north of 94 mph, with 18 qualified pitchers averaging at least 96. When Freeman debuted 17 years ago, the league-wide average was under 92 and no qualified pitchers averaged at least 96.

Arenado said that one of the first things that becomes tougher for MLB veterans is the ability to handle really good fastballs – particularly inside. It makes for tough matchups against pitchers like Milwaukee's Jacob Misiorowski, who routinely throws 100 mph.

"I feel like just the general age of the levels and the development is trending younger and younger," Walker said. "And there might be something to that – like your best bullets might be when you're 27 years old."

Big league teams value flexibility more

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts has Freeman and Muncy in his lineup on nearly a daily basis. He also played in the big leagues until he was 36 years old, retiring in 2008, giving him some personal experience on the aging process.

"The hardest part is to expect and want the same output you've always had, but not be willing to change the equation," Roberts said.

Roberts said the process is different for every player. Some need to work out more. Some less. Others need more sleep. Diet becomes more important. The tricky part is that the habits that brought you to the big leagues might not be the same ones that will keep you there in your mid-to-late 30s.

Walker, who didn't become a starter in the big leagues until he was 28, said he's embraced getting older and enjoys analyzing his blood tests that might signal what's causing vitamin deficiencies or inflammation. The tests also show how much alcohol might affect his body or the importance of a good night's sleep.

"For myself, no real magic recipe, just chalk it up to being a late bloomer," Walker said. "My age is older than most guys, but service time isn't. I haven't been in the big leagues for 20 years or anything like that. Just fortunate that I still can help the team."

Arenado embraces change

Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said he believed there were two main reasons Arenado was still having success in his 14th big league season. First, he gave credit to the D-backs' hitting coaches.

But maybe most importantly, Arenado has listened to those coaches, embraced change and found new ways to have success.

"There's an adjustment to work habits and mindset once you get to that level where things aren't as easy as they used to be," Lovullo said. "Some say 'I've had my career, it's not as easy as it once was, and I want to shut it down.'"

Later he added: "It's fun to watch Nolan Arenado have all this success, but he's worked his butt off. He's working as hard as any 22 or 23 year old we have on this team."

Gibbs expected to be Lions' 'bell cow' running back in '26

By NOLAN BIANCHI
The Detroit News (TNS)

ALLEN PARK — Jahmyr Gibbs, the floor is yours.

One season after the Detroit Lions increased his role in the offense, the team doubled down on making him a focal point by trading David Montgomery to the Houston Texans this offseason.

The addition of Isiah Pacheco, who had some good seasons earlier in his career, left many wondering how the split would be compared to what it was with Gibbs and Montgomery. Lions coach Dan Campbell said Thursday that Gibbs will be expected to do it all.

"He's going to be our bell cow now," Campbell said before an OTA practice. "He really became more of that last year, but we're going to hang our hat on him quite a bit."

Gibbs' larger workload – and Montgomery's decreased workload – was one of the biggest storylines last season. Montgomery led the duo in carries, 219-182, during the first season together in 2023. Gibbs took the lead in 2024 by a margin of 250-185 when Montgomery missed the final four games with an MCL injury.

But with both healthy last season, Gibbs took a much larger slice, racking up 243 carries compared to 158 for Montgomery as both players appeared in all 17 games. Sensing that Montgomery wasn't happy with the circumstances, Detroit moved him in a trade with the Texans this offseason.

Gibbs said being the guy is "nothing I'm not used to."

"Growing up, I've always been the person that (wants) everyone's carries," Gibbs said. "I'm not looking at it any different than any other year."

Part of the motivation for letting Gibbs have the backfield to himself is his ability to do everything at a high level.

"I've mentioned this before, he can run everything that we've got. He can run every scheme that anybody's ever run," Campbell said. "He's not just an outside runner. He is not just a space runner. He can create his own space in the middle, and some of his biggest runs have been gap scheme, right down the pipe, where he's had patience and found it and guys blocked it up well."

Despite being one of the most impactful offensive players in all of football last season, Gibbs is looking to have somewhat of a bounce-back year. Though he had his fair share of explosive runs, the Lions' offensive line struggles led to an inefficient rushing attack overall.

Gibbs had a career low in rushing success rate (46.5 percent) and his season-long numbers dropped across the board compared to 2024. He had 18 touchdowns from scrimmage compared to 20 the previous year, his yards per carry dropped from 5.6 to five, and his rushing yards per game went to 71.9 from 83.1.

Asked where Gibbs can grow the most from last season to this one, new offensive coordinator Drew Petzing said, "it can change as we go."

"I think a lot of it is going to be dictated by what we're good at as a unit," Petzing said. "Where are we the best, where are we the most effective? Who are we playing and how do we utilize his skill set to build on that? I mean, he does so many things at a high level that I don't think there's necessarily a ceiling or a cap on what that could look like."

"We expect him to have a big year for us," Campbell said. "We're going to put a lot on his plate in the run and pass game."

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Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Otis D Kirby and Krystle R Willming, joint tenants with full rights of survivorship
Original Mortgagee: Honor Credit Union
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: August 3, 2018
Date of Mortgage Recording: August 6, 2018
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $98,940.19
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pokagon, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Commencing at a point which is 24.64 rods South of a point which is 56.20 rods South 45 3/4 West from the most Westerly corner of Tuthill's Addition to the City of Dowagiac, as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 46, Cass County Records; thence South 64 degrees West 7.96 rods; thence South to the East and West Quarter line of Section 2, Town 6 South, Range 16 West, thence East along said Quarter line 7.055 rods; thence North to the place of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 29170 Pokagon St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-7703
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1595721 (06-13)(07-04)

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on JULY 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Danny Banks II, to Fifth Third Mortgage - MI, LLC, Mortgagee, dated September 26, 2008 and recorded October 8, 2008 in Liber 984, Page 501 Cass County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Fifth Third Bank, National Association as successor by merger to Fifth Third Mortgage Company, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Seventy-Two Thousand Thirty-Eight and 81/100 Dollars ($72,038.81).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on JULY 15, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Ontwa, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot Number 93, the North Half of Lot 92, and the South half of Lot 94, Redfield Woods No. 2, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber I of Plats, page 434, Cass County Records.
70862 Sherman Rd, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: June 13, 2026
File No. 26-004938
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (06-13)(07-04)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on July 1, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Mark Lewandowski, a Single Man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Rocket Mortgage, LLC, its successors and assigns Date of mortgage: September 30, 2024 Recorded on October 7, 2024, Book # 1251 on Page # 1850. Foreclosing Assignee: Rocket Mortgage, LLC. Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Two Hundred Forty-Seven Thousand Four Hundred Eighteen and 21/100 ($247,418.21) Mortgaged premises: Located in the Township of Milton, Cass County and described as: LOT NUMBERED 6 IN FRANTZ ACRES, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN LIBER 1-H OF PLATS, PAGE 385, CASS COUNTY RECORDS. Commonly known as 33546 Frantz Dr, Niles, MI 49120 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961 pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Please be advised that the trustee will require any entity or trust bidder at this trustee's sale to provide beneficial ownership information, documentation, and written certification as required under FinCEN's Anti-Money Laundering Regulations for Residential Real Estate Transfers, effective for transfers to covered transferees closing on or after March 1, 2026. This requirement applies where the purchaser is a legal entity (including an LLC, corporation, or partnership) or a trust, and the transfer is not financed by an institutional lender subject to existing anti-money laundering requirements. The required information and certification must be provided to the trustee prior to issuance of the trustee's deed upon sale. No trustee's deed will be issued for a covered transfer until all required FinCEN information has been received and certified. Additional information regarding these regulations and required transferee disclosures can be found at: https://www.fincen.gov/rre and https://www.fincen.gov/rre-faqs. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. ALAW 5404 Cypress Center Drive, Suite 300, Tampa, FL 33609 (813) 221-4743
26-002868 (05-30)(06-20)

Sell Your Unwanted Items Here!

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 8:00 o'clock a.m., in Room 2112 of the David C. Briegel Building, Southwestern Michigan College, Dowagiac, Michigan, the Board of Trustees of Southwestern Michigan College, as required by Section 16 of Act 2 of the Public Acts of 1968, as amended, will hold a public hearing to consider the College's proposed 2026-2027 budget. The Board may not adopt its proposed 2026-2027 budget until after the public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for the public inspection during normal business hours in the Business Office, Southwestern Michigan College, David C. Briegel Building, Dowagiac, Michigan. **The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of the hearing.**
This notice is given on behalf of the Board of Trustees.
/s/ Klint Pleasant, President.

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PENN, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a regular meeting of the Penn Township Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Penn Township Hall located at 60717 S. Main St., Vandalia, MI 49095, Cass County, Michigan. Call (269)476-2173 with any questions.

Purpose of Meeting:
* Consider Conditional Use Permit for Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District regarding 16 acres on Geneva Street.
* Discuss changing the minimum split on a 40-acre parcel zoned Agriculture from 2 acres to 1 acre. (Farmland preservation)
* Address allowing swimming pools to be constructed on the water side of waterfront properties

Public Welcome
Members of the public will be able to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting, and such comments will be limited to two minutes per person. Written comments will be received concerning the above matters via first-class mail to the Penn Township Clerk.

This notice is posted in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended, the Open Meetings Act, MCL 41.72a, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Penn Township Board will provide necessary reasonable aids and services, such as signers for the hearing-impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon five (5) days' notice to the Penn Township Board by writing or calling the Penn Township Clerk.

Penn Township Planning Commission,
By: Carl Sparks, Chairperson

Penn Township Clerk,
Rhonda Barnett
Address: PO Box 69,
Vandalia, MI 49095
Email: Penn_Clerk@outlook.com
Phone: (269) 816-516

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 5, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Frank J. Coussens, III, a single man
Original Mortgagee: JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: August 24, 2018
Date of Mortgage Recording: September 10, 2018
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $86,087.70
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Ontwa, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lots 46, 47 and 48, Eagle Park, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 98, Cass County Records.
Common street address (if any): 68776 West St, Edwardsburg, MI 49112-9585
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1595615 (06-13)(07-04)

TOWNSHIP OF CALVIN CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CALVIN, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Calvin Township Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing and meeting on July 1st, 2026 commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Calvin Township Hall, 18693 Mt. Zion Road, Cassopolis, MI, within the Township, to consider the following:
1) Zoning Ordinance text amendments to combine two existing Agricultural Districts (A-2 and A-1) into a single zoning district identified as "A" Agricultural District; to establish permitted and special land uses therein; and to add maximum height structure differences for farm structures; and
2) Zoning Ordinance text amendments to rename the "B" Business/Commercial District to "B" General Business/Mixed Use District and add by right and special uses of existing agriculture uses as well as provisions for future business uses to this ordinance
3) A zoning ordinance text amendment to incorporate the Tharp Lake Summer Resort Association into a Planned Unit Development; to provide standards to allow the existing uses to be split into individual parcels; and to establish the necessary items to be contained in a development agreement; and
4) Consideration of a new zoning map which will incorporate the former two Agriculture zoning districts into the new "A" Agricultural District; and new Parcels in the "B" General Business/Mixed Use District
5) Such other and additional business that shall come before the Planning Commission.
Anyone interested in reviewing the proposed text amendment and map referenced above; the existing Township Zoning Map or the Township Zoning Ordinance may examine a copy of the same by contacting the undersigned Clerk to make arrangements therefore, or may request the same from the Zoning Administrator, Matthew Jorgensen via email to swmizoning@gmail.com. and may further examine the same at said public hearing. The Township Zoning Ordinance can be accessed on www.calvintownship.org.
Written comments will be received from any interested persons concerning the foregoing by the Calvin Township Clerk at the Township Hall at any time during regular business hours up to the date of the hearing and may be further received by the Planning Commission at the hearing.
All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforesaid time and place.
Calvin Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed material being considered at the hearing, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' notice to the Calvin Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Calvin Township Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.
CALVIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
By: Matthew Jorgensen, Zoning Administrator
269-386-1110
By: Michelle Anderson, Clerk
18693 Mt. Zion Road
Cassopolis, MI 49031 www.calvintownship.org
269-476-2620

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 49c of the State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966, 1966 PA 346, MCL 125.1449c, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 08, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Bethany Emborsky, unmarried woman Original Mortgagee: Guaranteed Rate, Inc. Date of mortgage: March 17, 2025 Recorded on March 25, 2025, Liber 1258, on Page 330, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Michigan State Housing Development Authority Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety-Three and 70/100 Dollars ($129,793.70) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Cass County, and described as: Lots 89 and 90, Andrew Lester Addition to the City of Dowagiac, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, page 53, Cass County Records. Commonly known as 116 Sherwood St, Dowagiac, MI 49047 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 125.1449v, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 125.1449v(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Michigan State Housing Development Authority Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400
1595323 (06-06)(06-27)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Kyon Woodward, unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): PennyMac Loan Services, LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 5, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 17, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $64,643.93
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 7, Hoyt and Gardner's Addition to the City of Dowagiac, according to the recorded plat thereof as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 13, Cass County Records.
Common street address (if any): 210 S Lowe St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-1639
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1595361 (06-13)(07-04)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 a.m., on June 24, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT, ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY. Default has occurred in the conditions of a Mortgage (the "Mortgage") made by DEVON RICHARDS and PAOLA LIZARDI RICHARDS, husband and wife, as Mortgagor(s), to United Federal Credit Union, as Mortgagee. The Mortgage is dated April 17, 2023 and was recorded April 24, 2023 at Liber 1231, Page 1567 of Cass County Records. The amount claimed to be due on said Mortgage and unpaid at the date of this Notice is ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-TWO THOUSAND NINETY AND 67/100 ($152,090.67) DOLLARS, including interest on the applicable indebtedness at a variable rate which is currently 7.25% per annum. This sum will increase as additional interest, costs, expenses, and attorney fees accrue under the Mortgage and its related note and which are permitted under Michigan law after the date of this Notice. No legal or equitable proceedings have been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, and the power of sale in the Mortgage has become operative by reason of the default. At the date and time as referenced previously in this Notice, the Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the property herein described, or some part of them, at public auction, to the highest bidder, for the purpose of satisfying the amount due and unpaid on the Mortgage, along with interest due, the legal costs and charges of sale as allowed by statute and/or the Mortgage, and any taxes and insurance that the Mortgagee pays on or prior to the date of said sale. The property mentioned and described in the Mortgage, as located in the Township of Mason, County of Cass, and State of Michigan, are more particularly described as follows: Part of the East half of the Northwest fractional quarter of Section 24, Town 8 South, Range 14 West, Mason Township, Cass County, Michigan, described as: From the North quarter of said Section 24, measure West, along the North line of said Section, 100.00; thence measure South 0 degrees 32 minutes 36 seconds East, 380.00 feet; thence measure West, 560.00 feet; thence measure South 0 degrees 32 minutes 36 seconds East, 1694.97 feet to the point of beginning of the land herein described; thence South 0 degrees 32 minutes 36 seconds East, 300.00 feet to the Indiana-Michigan State Line; thence South 89 degrees 36 minutes 05 seconds West, along said State Line, 247.95 feet; thence North 0 degrees 34 minutes 34 seconds West, 300.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 36 minutes 05 seconds East, 248.12 feet to the point of beginning; Address: 16780 State Line Rd., Union, MI 49130; Tax Parcel No.: 14-060-024-374-47; together with all existing or subsequently erected or affixed buildings, improvements, and fixtures; all easements, rights of way, streets, roads, alleys, and public places, privileges, and appurtenances, public or private, now or later used in connection with the premises; and all rights to make divisions of the land that are exempt from the platting requirements of all applicable land division or platting acts, as amended from time to time. Attention Purchasers: the foreclosing Mortgagee reserves the right to cancel the sale prior to sale or to rescind this sale at any time. In that event, your damages, if any, will be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at the sale, plus interest. If the mortgaged property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The length of the redemption period will be six (6) months from date of sale, unless the redemption period is shortened pursuant to MCL 600.3241a or MCL 600.3238, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of sale or as otherwise provided by statute. DATED: May 23, 2026 ANDREW W. BARNES (P70571) BUTZEL LONG P.C. ATTORNEYS FOR UNITED FEDERAL CREDIT UNION 317 Center Street, South Haven, MI 49090; 269-287-2010 (05-23)(06-13)

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0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
Cass COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
20260073-DE

Court address:
60296 M-62, Ste 10,
Cassopolis, MI 49031
Court phone no.
269-4454454

Estate of: Betty Lou Ash
Date of birth: 07/04/1948

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Betty Lou Ash died 02/21/2026. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Bradley Charles Lee Sr., personal representatives, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Ste 10, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 06/03/2026

Personal Representative(s)
Bradley Lee Sr.
706 E. York St
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269)445-7075

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF CASS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

FILE NO.
2026-139-DE

Estate of:
Darlene A. Cain
Date of birth: 07/07/1937

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Darlene A. Cain, died 03/22/2026. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Ann Blanchard, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62 Ste 10, Cassopolis, MI 49031, and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 06/08/2026

Attorney Name:
Kahlyn N. Ashcraft P88299
THK Law, LLP,
212 E. LaSalle Ave., Ste 100
South Bend, IN 46617
574-232-3538

Personal Representative:
Ann Blanchard
58378 Terrace Lane
Elkhart, IN 46517
574-232-3538

Auction
Where: Automotive Plus 2411 S. 11th St. Niles MI 49120
Phone Number: 269-684-4700
Date of Auction: 06/18/2026
Time of Auction: 9 am

2011 Cadillac CTS VIN
1G6DG5EY3B0106683

HERITAGE SOUTHWEST INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on June 24, 2026, at 9:45 a.m., at 61682 Dailey Road, Cassopolis, Michigan, the Board of Education of Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District will hold a public hearing to consider the district's proposed 2026-2027 budget.

The Board may not adopt its proposed 2026-2027 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for public inspection during normal business hours at 61682 Dailey Road, Cassopolis, Michigan.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. *

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Debra Cripe, Secretary

0900 LEGALS

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday June 27, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.
Unit # Name
21 Cecelia Dunifin
27 Nicolas Sansom
28 Emalee Anderson
60 Roenea Anderson
62 Andrew Dunifin
67 Jerome Jankowiak
77 Brittany Mitchell
82 Ericka Pitone
85 Shelden Walden
92 Robert Procopi
99 Joseph Tocco
125/179 Steve Kelley
127/633 Chris Norris
145/468 Michael Merritt
148 Gloster Johnson
183 Cindy Fisher
184/66 Mary Anderson
185 Candy Whitmire
190/306 Linda Nilson
191 Alan Smith
192 Patricia Yoder
240 Teyshawn Wallace
258 Brianna Coon
259 Rose Mitchell
268 Dan Hoft
270 Vincent Bosch
273 Tony Pompey
278 Chelsie Carlyle
284 Kathleen Peterson
322 Frank Starr
331 Valerie Outlaw
334 Sheila Kollars
342 Terrence Moss
346 DaMonica Williams
347 Tyreak Hunter
356 Chase Molica
379 Bobbie Helms
389 Parnell Jenkins
396 Latasha Perog
398 Andre Love
410/534 Rebecca Coleman
416 Kathie Adams
418 Melissa Hocker
427 McCade Reese
429 Aaron Haynes
442 Dawn Hojara
451 Jean Fitch
452 Tyler Mahar
492/676 Malawi Association
506 Elizabeth Luttrell
526 Keith Hill
528 Ron Haynes
541 Nicole Hurt
545 Candy Whitmire
608 Robert Conner
639 Barry Brann
665 Rodney Prescott
677/567 Julie Potate

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday June 27, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.
5 Paul Welling
25 John Harrington
28 Lawson Fink
47/49 Jasmine Collett
52 Alana Abrams
54 Cynthia Swisher

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120, Auction Saturday June 27, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.
127A Tim Chavis
200A Mike Nidiffer
107 Bobby Marrow
140 Ronnie West
168 Jerol Williams Jr.
208 Ryan Smith
227 Jennifer Nichols
263 Tamara Holmes
292 The Woodshed Crafts
308 Ray Vincent
373 Rhonda Sue Outlaw
377 Christy Stevens
399 Lisa Hayslip
481 Natosha Libertowski
521 Paul Mowrey

0900 LEGALS

EDWARDSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on Monday, June 22, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., the Board of Education of Edwardsburg Public Schools, Cass County Michigan, will hold a public hearing to consider the District's proposed 2026-2027 budget.

The Board may not adopt its proposed 2026-2027 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for public inspection **by appointment only** by calling 269.663.3055 at the District Administrative Center, 27145 US 12, Edwardsburg, Michigan.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.[1]

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Tammy Niemier, Secretary
Board of Education
Edwardsburg Public Schools

Niles Community Schools is accepting bids for roof improvements at Ballard Elementary. Please contact Carmi Design Group at 269-663-5073 for the full bid documents.

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Howard Township Park Commission invites qualified contractors to submit proposals for 20' x 20' gable pavilion with roofing, 20' x 20' concrete slab, removal of old slab and pavilion, load, haul and dispose of all debris.

Pre-bid meeting will be held at **10 am June 16, 2026.**

We will meet at the Howard Charter Township Hall 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, MI. This bid package will be reviewed and any questions you have will be addressed.

To be considered, two (2) copies of completed proposal must be received no later than **June 23, 2026, by 4pm.**

Proposals can be mailed, emailed or delivered in person.

Proposals should be addressed to:
Howard Charter Township
Sherri Woznizak, Clerk
1345 Barron Lake Road
Niles, MI 49120

Submitters should mark the submittal envelope with:
Attn: Parks-Pavilion Project
Email to: depclerk@howardtwp.org

Bid opening will be at **10 am June 24, 2026**, at the township hall.

It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded on **June 24, 2026**.

Submitted proposals become the property of Howard Charter Township and will not be returned.

Proposals received by Howard Charter Township after the specified time above, will not be considered.

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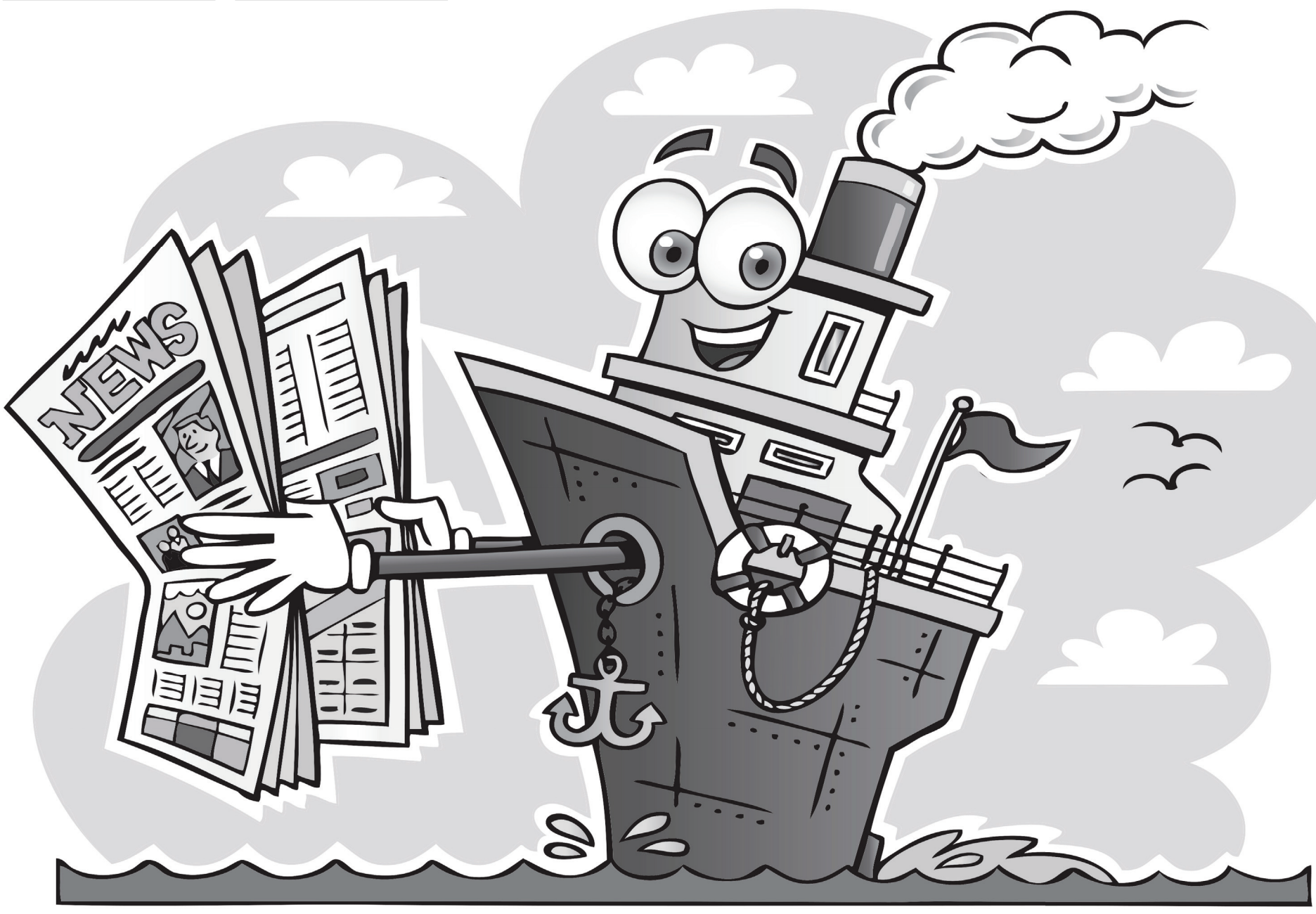

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FOOTBALL

Jameson Williams focused on improving ball skills ahead of '26

By RICHARD SILVA
The Detroit News (TNS)

TNS / Robin Buckson, The Detroit News

Lions wide receiver Jameson Williams (1) runs the ball away from Cowboys safety Markquese Bell (14) at Ford Field in Detroit on Dec. 4, 2025.

ALLEN PARK — Among every player who's spent time with the Detroit Lions since coach Dan Campbell and general manager Brad Holmes were hired in 2021, few, if any, have enjoyed more growth than Jameson Williams, who went from catching a single pass in his first season to becoming one of only 10 receivers in the NFL to have at least 1,000 yards in each of the last two campaigns.

Williams, 25, has developed into one of the league's best by placing a heightened focus on the game's finer intricacies. His route tree has expanded since he was drafted 12th overall in 2022, and his rapport with quarterback Jared Goff has grown tremendously. Williams was targeted on 1.5 percent of Detroit's passing attempts as a rookie. That share climbed to 6.9 percent in 2023, 16.5 percent in 2024, and 17.5 percent in 2025. The team has rewarded the receiver's efforts with more opportunity, and Williams has repaid the Lions by producing at a high level.

Next up for Williams is improving his hands, which has been an emphasis this offseason.

"That was my main thing, catching," Williams said last week at OTAs. "I wanted to get better at catching."

Despite his production and obvious value as a field-stretcher, Williams in 2025 struggled with drops. Pro Football Reference tracked a league-worst 12 drops for the dynamic piece, whose drop percentage (11.8 percent) was in the bottom three among qualified receivers. Pro Football Focus only gave Williams nine drops, but that still paced all players, tied with Cleveland's Jerry Jeudy and the Los Angeles Rams' Davante Adams.

Williams said his drops can be ascribed to "a mind thing," more to do with momentary lapses in focus than any overarching physical limitations. He's taken "a lot" of mental reps this offseason, he said. Williams had two drops apiece in 2024 and 2022, as well as five in 2023, according to PFF. His breakout season at Alabama – 1,572 yards and 15 touchdowns – included six drops.

Williams had more yards after the catch last season (447) than all but nine other receivers, and one of them (Amon-Ra St. Brown, 591) was his teammate. The Lions have been a top-six team in yards after the catch every year since 2022, playing to Goff's strengths as a decisive thrower over the middle of the field.

U.S. hoping Balogun, strikers can end woes

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

IRVINE, Calif. — Folarin Balogun chose to play for the United States precisely because of the opportunity he's about to get over the next few weeks.

Balogun could have stuck with England, where he grew up and with which he began his international career at the under-21 level. He also considered playing for his parents' Nigeria.

But three years ago, the goal-scoring striker chose to represent the country in which he was born – and instead of being stuck behind Harry Kane and Ollie Watkins with the Three Lions, the 24-year-old Balogun is likely to be an important player for the Americans in their home World Cup.

"I feel like my individual journey is a bit full circle now, approaching the World Cup," Balogun said this week at the U.S. training base in Orange County, California. "Especially with the World Cup being here, the opportunity to represent my nation in front of a home crowd is going to be something special for me, for my family, for my friends and for the team. I'm definitely looking forward to it, and very proud."

Balogun's decision was a coup for the U.S. because of his elite skill – he scored 19 goals for Ligue 1's Monaco this season – but also because he does a job that the American team has historically struggled to fill.

Ever since the U.S. began to achieve regular World Cup qualification nearly four decades ago, one big problem has prevented the Americans from making any additional progress: They can't win because they don't score enough.

A nation brimming with world-class athletes across the entire spectrum of sports has struggled to consistently produce soccer scorers, particularly the elite strikers who generate goals, excitement and wins.

The U.S. scored three goals in four matches at the Qatar World Cup four years ago, with just one coming from a striker. It's a generational issue: In their past eight World Cups since 1990, the Americans have scored a paltry 28 goals in 30 matches.

But the forwards likely to be at the front of the American formation this month are eager to prove they can change things, starting in the U.S. opener against Paraguay on Friday night.

Balogun and fellow striker Ricardo Pepi both have solid credentials in European club play, and they're entering the World Cup in strong form, with Pepi also coming off a 19-goal season for PSV Eindhoven.

Haji Wright, a Los Angeles native, scored that lone striker's goal for the U.S. in Qatar – even if he maybe did it accidentally – and he has improved since then, racking up 18 goals last season while Coventry earned promotion to the Premier League.

"We see this as a fantastic opportunity to play in front of our country," said Pepi, who wears the No. 9 shirt. "The pressure aside, we see it more as an opportunity."

The U.S. Open is getting away from its roots with a shrinking number of qualifiers

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

Two players going into their senior year of high school are playing in the U.S. Open next week, along with another teenager who is headed off to college.

The field for Shinnecock Hills includes T.K. Kim, a 35-year-old who was born in South Korea, raised on Maui, played college golf at Boise State and will get ready for his first U.S. Open by playing two Oklahoma mini-tour events in Muskogee and Duncan.

Billy Horschel has 10 worldwide wins and more than $42.5 million in career PGA Tour earnings, not including his $10 million bonus from winning the FedEx Cup. His path to Shinnecock Hills was no different from 17-year-old Miles Russell or Arni Sveinsson, who will make history as the first player from Iceland in the U.S. Open.

This is what makes the U.S. Open stand out from the other four majors. It gets called the toughest test in golf – sometimes too tough – but it prides itself on being the most "open" of any Open.

David Fay, who spent 21 years as the USGA executive director, once said, "It's not the best field in golf. It never pretended to be. It's the most democratic championship."

Fay might raise his eyebrows when he looks at the numbers now.

By the time the USGA was done handing out exemptions this year – based on performance at the PGA Tour, European tour and LIV Golf – only 62 spots were available in final qualifying. That included just 43 spots on Monday, which still tries to sell itself as the "Longest Day in Golf" even with the shrinking numbers.

Ten years ago, the 156-man field at Oakmont included 80 players who had to earn their way there through 36-hole qualifiers. Twenty-seven of them first had to get through 18-hole local qualifiers, a list that included 19-year-old Sam Burns.

For this year at Shinnecock Hills, the qualifiers stand at a mere 62 players.

That number figures to go up because the USGA has set aside seven spots for players who potentially can qualify through the top 60 in the world ranking after this week (Memorial winner J.T. Poston is a lock).

Even so, it's not close to the U.S Open ideal of a 50-50 split. That had been the sweet spot for years until the USGA responded to the changing landscape in golf and went away from its roots by trying to get all the right players.

The only player the U.S. Open probably missed out on over the years was Justin Rose in 2010 when he won the Memorial and moved to No. 33 in the world, two weeks after the cutoff for what was then top 50. The next year, the USGA added a second deadline the week before the Open so that wouldn't happen again.

But over the past few years, the USGA felt it should recognize LIV Golf by adding two spots – a leading player from last year (Joaquin Niemann) and this year (Lucas Herbert). Nothing would have kept either one from trying to qualify.

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Athletes credit scope for quick recoveries

By JAY COHEN
AP Baseball Writer

CHICAGO — Several top pro athletes and their surgeons say a modern version of an old tool is shaving weeks off the recovery time for certain injuries. And some top doctors think this is only the beginning.

Cy Young Award winners Tarik Skubal and Blake Snell let doctors use the instrument on their prized elbows. Connor Hellebuyck, the 2025 Hart Trophy winner as NHL MVP, trusted it to address issues in his knee. Several NFL players have turned to it, too.

It's called the NanoNeedle scope 2.0, a miniaturized, flexible version of the traditional arthroscope. It's very early – there is little published research on the model – but it is accumulating an impressive list of proponents.

"Every time I've used it, including when I started using it in the lab, different types of procedures occur to me that we could do," said Dr. Neal ElAttrache, the head team physician for the Los Angeles Dodgers and Los Angeles Rams.

An arthroscope is a pencil-like tube with a camera that goes into joints, expands the area with salt water or saline, and projects an image onto a screen. Then doctors insert secondary instruments in the same area to perform the surgical procedure.

With the diminished size – 1.9 millimeters in diameter, compared to 4 millimeters for a traditional scope – the NanoNeedle is designed to cause less pain, inflammation and tissue damage, leading to a faster recovery. It uses much less fluid than a traditional scope, and it also is proving to be a valuable tool when it comes to diagnosing the extent of certain injuries.

"Basically, we're able to accomplish anatomic type of work and repair with far less surgical trauma," ElAttrache said.

Isaac Ritchey / The Grand Rapids Press

Detroit Tigers pitcher Tarik Skubal throws in a rehab start for the West Michigan Whitecaps against the Dayton Dragons in Comstock Park, Mich., on June 7.

Star athletes have returned ahead of schedule after NanoNeedle procedures

The NanoNeedle was used when Skubal had a loose body removed from his left elbow by ElAttrache on May 6, and again when Snell had a similar elbow surgery on May 19.

When Skubal – a two-time AL Cy Young Award winner who is eligible for free agency after this season – was placed on the injured list, the Detroit Tigers said the ace would be sidelined for two to three months. But he is expected to return on Saturday after pitching five scoreless innings in a rehab start on Sunday – a turnaround of about 5 ½ weeks.

ElAttrache said he has used the NanoNeedle scope with four patients, but he declined to identify the other two cases. Snell had a bigger operation that also involved the sculpting of a spur, but ElAttrache is optimistic about the timeline for the left-hander's return to the Dodgers.

"The percentage of time out, I think, is going to be about half the time for Snell," ElAttrache said.

Hellebuyck, a three-time Vezina Trophy winner as the NHL's top goalie, had arthroscopic surgery on his right knee on Nov. 22. He was expected to be sidelined for four to six weeks, but he was back in net for the Winnipeg Jets after three weeks.

Dr. James Voos, the head team physician for the Cleveland Browns, said he has used the NanoNeedle during procedures on five Browns players, including center Luke Wypler's ankle fracture surgery.

"Ankles and elbows I think are areas where it has had very great utility and then rapidly adopted," said Voos, who also serves as the president of the NFL Physicians Society. "And we're finding more and more uses in the knee and shoulder."

In addition to his duties with the Browns, Voos is the chair of the orthopedics departments at University Hospitals and Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. He already has seen benefits when it comes to the treatment of younger athletes.

"There are some very challenging elbow injuries in gymnasts and baseball players that the previous cameras were too large for the joint," Voos said. "They're designed for adult joints. So the smaller camera allows us to see and work in these smaller spaces. In pediatrics and adolescence, that was more challenging and potentially caused more damage before, some more soft tissue damage."

NanoNeedle has been in the works for a few years, and it's still evolving

The NanoNeedle was developed by Arthrex, a Florida-based company that makes medical supplies. Voos is an educational consultant for Arthrex, and ElAttrache has worked with the company for more than 30 years.

The initial version was created in 2019, according to Ryan Kellar, a senior product manager at Arthrex. There was another version that came out in 2023 before the current model – with upgraded visualization, processing and imaging – was released in August.

"This is our third iteration," Kellar said. "We already have the fourth iteration coming in the fall. That fourth iteration is going to be everything that this conventional scope is at all the less invasive benefits of nano arthroscopy. So we really believe that nano is the next foundation of less invasive orthopedic care for general population, as well as kind of a gold standard for athletes."

Dr. Kyle Hammond, the head team physician for the Atlanta Falcons and head orthopedic surgeon for the Atlanta Hawks, has used the NanoNeedle in a teaching setting as an orthopedic surgeon at Emory Healthcare and assistant professor at Emory University School of Medicine. But he hasn't used it on a patient yet.

Hammond said other companies have made similar devices for needle arthroscopy, but he praised the quality of the camera and the video feed with the NanoNeedle, along with its ease of use.

"It really has basically become very similar to what our standard arthroscopy equipment is," he said. "It's just on a smaller scale."

The current version of the NanoNeedle is disposable, raising questions about cost versus the expense of sterilization for the reusable traditional arthroscope. Like anything in science, Hammond said, more usage and research are needed to assess the benefits of the new design versus the standard version of the scope.

"To kind of determine if they have true efficacy over the standard of care, they have to be used for a long period of time and you have to collect data and you kind of have to prove that from a statistical model," Hammond said.

Dr. Brian Cole, the head team physician for the Chicago Bulls, said the level of adoption will depend in large part on the willingness of clinicians to incorporate the scope into their workflow.

"There's a sort of econometric analysis on top of a healthcare analysis at the same time," said Cole, who also is a consultant for Arthrex. "But I would say directionally, this is where we're going. Less invasive, cost-effective, predictable, eliminating problems that we might or could have with existing technology. So, in that regard, this is very innovative, you know, in my opinion, and it's consistent with the direction we're going in."

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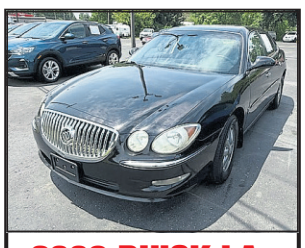

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2020 KIA SPORTAGE LX

Only 78k miles and ready to save gas!

Only $14,775

2004 VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE GLS

Like new! Convertible, only 49k miles
Fun in the sun!

$14,900 or only $267/mo

2021 CHEVY TRAX LT

AWD, Leather & Great Gas Mileage!

$16,725 or only $310/m

2021 HYUNDAI SONATA

Only 49k miles on this gas saver!

$17,525 or only $370/mo

2021 BUICK ENCORE GX

Just In!! Only 80k Miles and Like New!

$17,900 or only $330/mo

2019 GMC TERRAIN SLE

Blacked out! AWD with only 78k miles

Only $18,900

2015 RAM 1500 OUTDOORSMAN

4 x 4, V-6, Nice wheels!

$19,500 or only $360/mo

2024 NISSAN SENTRA

Just in!! Like new for less!

$19,775 or only $365/mo

2022 JEEP COMPASS LATITUDE

AWD, like new with only 58k miles!

Only $20,900

2018 SUBARU FORESTER

Premium edition, AWD, loaded!

Only $20,900

2020 NISSAN PATHFINDER SL

4WD, Third Row Seating, Only 90k miles!

$21,900 or only $405/mo

2022 KEYSTONE CT3400

Like new but half the price

$22,200 or only $365/mo

2024 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SPORT

AWD. Like new with only 38k miles!

$23,700 or only $367/mo

2024 TOYOTA COROLLA SE

Just In!! Like New! Leather Seats & LOADED!

$23,900 or only $392/mo

2016 CHEVY TAHOE

4 x 4, ex police car, only 97k miles

Only $24,700

2024 FORD MUSTANG

Just in!
Ready for Fun!!!

$29,550 or only $480/m

2020 CADILLAC ESCALADE

Fully loaded luxury edition!

Only $34,975

2025 JEEP WRANGLER 4XE WILLYS

Just in!! only 17k miles

Only $36,375

2024 FORD E-350 CARGO

16ft box trucks with miles in the 40's. Like new for half the price. 2 left!

$37,900 or only $618/mo

2025 BUICK ENCLAVE PREFERRED

AWD, leather, like new with only 23k miles!

Only $39,625

1964 CHEVY CHEVELLE SS

Old School Convertible, Ready to cruise!

$40,000

2023 FORD TRANSIT

12 Pass., Only 58k Miles! Ready for Spring Break!

$43,900 or only $705/mo

2020 LINCOLN NAVIGATOR

Just In! Only 69k Miles, 7 Pass., Leather, Loaded!

$49,900 or only $810/mo

2015 FORD MOTORHOME

Only 19k Miles and Ready for Vacation!

$50,000 or only $810/mo

2025 FORD F-350 SUPER DUTY 4X4

Power Stroke Diesel, Only 89k Miles

$55,500 or only $954/mo

2025 FORD F350 XLT SUPER DUTY

4 x 4, 6.7L Powerstroke diesel, only 86k miles

$59,500 or only $954/mo

14 and older 8.9% x 60 mos, 10 - 17 8.9% x 60 mos., 15 - 19 7.49% x 72mos, 20 - 25 7.49% x 78 mos, w/720 credit

SEE A STAR IT'S A 1 OWNER CAR

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